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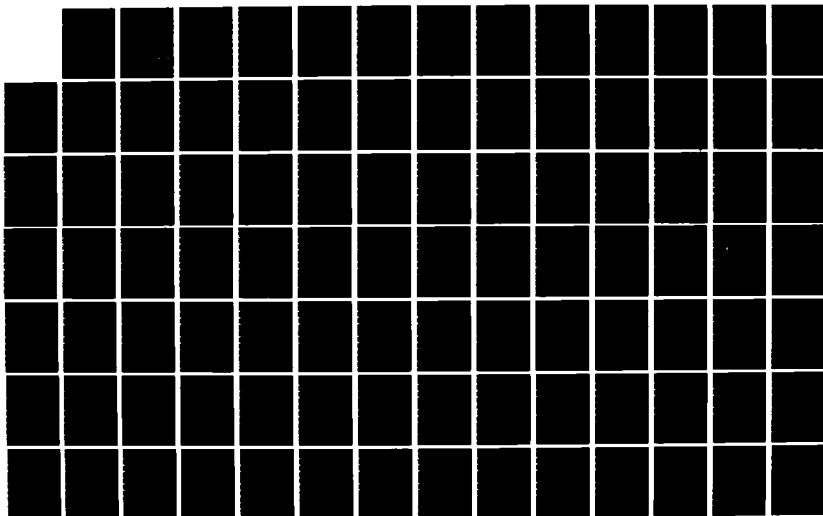
AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLES EMPLOYED BY
FREDERICK THE GREAT A (U) ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL
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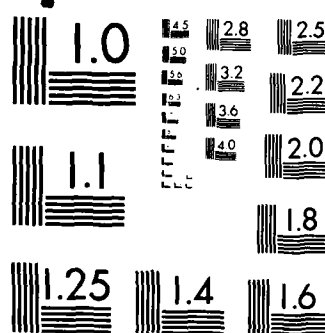
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AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLES
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JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON IN THE CONDUCT OF WAR
AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

As this is presented to the Faculty of the U. S. Army
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fulfillment of the requirements for the
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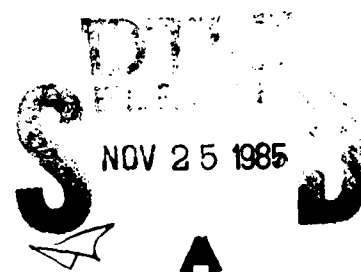
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

JOHN A. GRAHAM, MAJOR, USA
B.A., Boston University, 1972
M.A., Webster College, 1981

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1985



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Title of Thesis: An Historical Analysis of the Principles Employed
by Frederick the Great and Joseph E. Johnston in the Conduct of War
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the
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statement.)

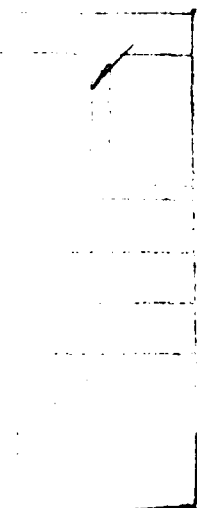
ABSTRACT

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLES EMPLOYED BY FREDERICK THE GREAT AND JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON IN THE CONDUCT OF WAR AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL, BY Major John A. Graham, USA, 138 pages.

This study is an historical analysis of the principles utilized by Frederick the Great and General Joseph E. Johnston to conduct war at the operational level. To derive these principles selected campaigns of each are examined. For Frederick these are the first three years of the Seven Years War; for Johnston they are the Peninsula Campaign and the Atlanta Campaign of the American Civil War.

Having derived the principles employed by each, a comparison of their principles is made. The focus of this comparison is on the different manner in which each approached the conduct of warfare at the operational level. The major contributing factor to this difference is their relative positions within the governments of their respective nations. Frederick, as the King of Prussia, had the absolute authority to establish policy and set strategy. Johnston was forced to conduct his operations within the confines of the strategy established by the Confederacy.

The study concludes with a discussion of some of the implications of this comparison for the modern practitioner of the operational art. The most telling of these is that in order to achieve success, the operational commander must be given the means with which to achieve the strategic goals set for him. If these means are not commensurate with the assigned tasks, either the operational goal must be modified or the strategic ends must be changed.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project could not have been completed without the advice and guidance of the members of my thesis committee, Doctor W.G. Robertson, Lieutenant Colonel Jack A. Hixson and Doctor Robert M. Epstein. To them I owe a special note of gratitude and thanks.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my mentor for the past year, Lieutenant Colonel Harold R. Winton. His guidance throughout my sojourn at the School of Advanced Military Studies has been of invaluable assistance.

Finally, and most importantly, I wish to thank my wife Jo. Without her patience, understanding and help this project would never have been finished.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Maps	iv
 Chapter 1: Introduction	
Statement of the problem	1
Definitions	3
Methodolgy	7
 Chapter 2: Frederick the Great	
The Campaigns of 1756, 1757, and 1758	10
Frederick as an Operational Commander	38
Endnotes	58
 Chapter 3: Joseph E. Johnston	
Johnston's Campaigns	64
Johnston as an Operational Commander	98
Endnotes	117
 Chapter 4: Conclusions	
The Principles Compared	122
Implications	128
Conclusion	130
Endnotes	132
 Bibliography	1333
Initial Distribution List	138

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1	North Central Europe	p46
Map 2	Operations in 1756	p47
Map 3	Battle of Lowositz	p48
Map 4	Invasion of Bohemia 1757	p49
Map 5	Battle of Prague	p50
Map 6	Battle of Kolin	p51
Map 7	Withdrawal from Bohemia 1757	p52
Map 8	Operations in 1757	p53
Map 9	Battle of Rosbach	p54
Map 10	Battle of Leuthen	p55
Map 11	Battle of Zorndorf	p56
Map 12	Battle of Hochkirch	p57
Map 13	Situation 11 March 1862	p106
Map 14	Situation 4 April 1862	p107
Map 15	Battle of Williamsburg	p108
Map 16	Situation 24 May 1862	p109
Map 17	Battle of Seven Pines	p110
Map 18	Dalton and vicinity	p111
Map 19	Movements May 1864	p112
Map 20	Cassville and vicinity	p113
Map 21	Marietta and Dallas	p114
Map 22	Battle of Kenesaw Mountain	p115
Map 23	Situation 3 July 1864	p116

Chapter 1

Introduction

Strategy alone will remain with its principles, which are the same under the Scipios and the Caesars as under Frederick, Peter the Great and Napoleon, for they are independent of the nature of arms or the organization of troops.(1)

Frederick II, King of Prussia, and Joseph E. Johnston, General in the Army of the Confederacy, one well known to every student of history and the other little studied, were both masters of the art of fighting against numerically superior foes. In considering the careers of these two men a question that immediately comes to mind is why each of them was successful in commanding large formations of men in combat? This thesis will attempt to partially answer this question, for the central question to be addressed herein is "What principles for the employment of forces at the operational level of war did these two great leaders have in common?" To answer this question will necessitate identifying the principles employed by each during his campaigns.

The rationale for undertaking this task is the reintroduction of the concept of the operational level of war into U.S. Army doctrine. This shift in orientation was taken in 1982 with the publication of a new FM 100-5,

Operations . The thrust of this manual is that operational art will translate battlefield, or tactical, success into strategic success. However, this field manual does not address what, if any, principles should be employed by the practitioners of the operational art in the planning and conduct of warfare at this level. A historical study of the campaigns of Frederick and Johnston may be a start in uncovering these principles, if they exist.

This study is based on two interrelated assumptions. The first assumption is that principles can be derived from historical analysis. The second assumption implicit in attempting to derive these principles of operational art is that such principles transcend history and are not limited by technology or specific terrain.

These two assumptions, then, partially justify the selection of Frederick II and General Johnston. If principles for the operational art are common to these two individuals, separated by the gulf of a century and from widely diverse cultural backgrounds, then a case can be made for their applicability today.

A second reason for choosing these two commanders is that despite their chronological and geographic separation, they are linked. Their link comes from the influence Frederick II had on Napoleon and his interpreters, most notably Henri Jomini. This impact was transferred to the U.S. where the influence of Napoleonic warfare, and the writings of Jomini, had a clear impact on the officers, including Johnston, who were to lead the armies of the Union

and the Confederacy.(2)

Finally, the two were chosen, as already mentioned, because they were masters of fighting against a numerically superior opponent. Since the U.S. Army, with its current doctrine, is committed to the idea of fighting outnumbered and winning, an analysis of the principles employed by Frederick and Johnston may prove to be of value to our own practitioners of the operational art.

Having examined the rationale for undertaking the study, some definitions and an explanation for the methodology to be employed must be addressed in order to establish a framework for the thesis. Since the prerequisite for developing a coherent argument is the acceptance of a common vocabulary, the first task will be to lay out a definition of two concepts already mentioned.

The first definition required is that of the "operational level of war" or "operational art." The 1982 version of FM 100-5 delineates three levels of war, the strategic, the operational and the tactical. Its definition of the operational level is:

"The operational level of war uses available military resources to attain strategic goals within a theater of war. Most simply, it is the theory of larger unit operations. It also involves planning and conducting campaigns. Campaigns are sustained operations designed to defeat an enemy force in a specified space and time with simultaneous and sequential battles. The disposition of forces, selection of objectives, and actions taken to weaken or to outmaneuver the enemy all set the terms of the next battle and exploit

tactical gains. They are all part of the operational level of war."(3)

While this definition may be satisfying to practitioners of the art of war in the 20th Century, does it adequately define the term for use in the 18th and 19th Centuries? Clausewitz offers a slightly different perspective on the definition.

"The conduct of war, then, consists in the planning and conduct of fighting. If fighting consisted of a single act, no further subdivision would be needed. However, it consists of a greater or lesser number of single acts, each complete in itself, as we pointed out in Chapter I of Book I, are called 'engagements' and which form new entities. This gives rise to the completely different activity of planning and executing these engagements themselves, and of coordinating each of them with the others in order to further the object of the war. One has been called tactics, and the other strategy."(4)

A definition which combines the gist of both of these is found in FC 100-15, Corps Operations. In this circular the operational level is defined as:

"The bridge between strategic and tactical military operations; the commander at this level synchronizes subordinate tactical battles to achieve the larger ends of strategy... The operational level focuses on the broad conduct of operations... Defeat, the primary objective, is achieved by incapacitating the enemy's military

organization, and convincing him that he cannot win, which is not necessarily the same thing as destroying his individual components." (5)

These three views of the level of war that bridge the gap between national military strategy, or in Clausewitzian terms policy, and the tactical level of the engagement can be transposed onto the conduct of campaigns during the 18th and 19th Centuries. The definition that will be utilized in this thesis is: The operational level is the bridge between strategy and tactics. It involves the maneuver of large military formations in order to shape the course of the engagements and it employs the results of individual engagements to shape the campaign in order to achieve strategic aims.

The term operational art will also be utilized. It will apply to the process of maneuvering large military formations in order to achieve success at the tactical level.

The final definition that must be addressed is that of the word "principle." The simple solution would be to state that a principle is synonymous with a rule or a law. However, this simplistic approach begs the question since a principle is not an ironclad law but a more general concept. To begin to understand the fluid nature of this term one should look at two concepts, one from the 20th Century and the other from the 19th.

The 20th Century concept is expressed in FM 100-1 in

the section dealing with the "Principles of War." Here principles are considered as part of the art, rather than the science, of war. They, the principles of war, are derived from critical historical analysis of what has produced success in the past. "They are neither intended nor designed to be prescriptive; the principles of war, if understood and applied properly, should stimulate thought and flexibility of action." (6)

The 19th Century concept of a principle is taken from Clausewitz. In On War he discusses the concept and utility of principles.

"Principle is also a law for action, but not in its formal, definitive meaning ; it represents only the spirit and the sense of the law; in cases where the diversity of the real world cannot be contained within the rigid form of law, the application of principle allows for greater latitude of judgment. Cases to which principle cannot be applied must be settled by judgment; principles thus become essentially a support, or lodestar, to the man responsible for the action." (7)

In these two definitions a certain commonality can be seen. Principles are not rules or laws that must be followed in order to achieve success. Rather they serve as guideposts for the military commander to aid in his decision making process. It is this concept of principle that this thesis will employ to determine the guideposts, or decision making criteria, utilized by each commander in planning and conducting military operations were used.

A further word about principles must be added before discussing the methodology to be employed in this thesis. In its purest sense a principle is by its very nature abstract. This is readily apparent when one looks at the so-called "Principles of War", which by definition apply to all three levels of war. However, at some point in progressing from the strategic level to the tactical the abstract must be converted to the concrete. In Clausewitzian terms as one progresses down the levels of war theory will be supplemented by method and routine. The question then arises at what point does this transformation take place? The purpose of this thesis is not to answer this question, although the answer will have an impact on the final results of this work. It should not surprise us to see a certain blending of the abstract and the concrete at the operational level of war. It may turn out that some of the principles of the operational art are in fact techniques employed by these commanders.

Having sketched the rationale for the thesis and provided some key definitions, a discussion of the methodology to be employed is in order. Chapters two and three address the question of what principles governed Frederick's and Johnston's employment of forces at the operational level of war. For Frederick the focus will be on the first campaigns (1756, 1757, 1758) of the Seven Years War. For Johnston we will examine two separate periods, the first being his time as the commander of the Department of Northern Virginia (October 1861 to June 1862). The second

period will of his command of the Army of Tennessee during the Atlanta Campaign (December 1863 to July 1864).

Chapter 4 compares and contrasts the operational principles employed by this two commanders. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications for the practitioners of the operational art in the U.S. Army, and whether there is validity to the assumption that a critical historical analysis can uncover these principles.

ENDNOTES

1. Henri Jomini, A Summary of the Art of War, (New York: G.P. Putnam and Co., 1954), p59.
2. Russel Weigley, The American Way of War (New York: MacMillian Publishing Co., 1973), p83-84.
3. U.S. Army, FM100-5, Operations, (1982), p2-3.
4. Clausewitz, Carl von. On War, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), p128.
5. U.S. Army, FC100-15, Corps Operations, (1984), p4-3.
6. U.S. Army, FM100-1, The Army, (1981), p13.
7. Clausewitz, p151.

CHAPTER 2

FREDERICK THE GREAT

"Read and reread the history of all of Frederick's campaigns; model yourself upon them"---Napoleon

THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1756, 1757, 1758

The political and military situation in Europe in 1756 was anything but stable, the French and English were engaged in sporadic fighting in their far flung colonial domains and it appeared as if a general war on the Continent itself was inevitable. What made this conflict inevitable was the continuing hostility of Austria toward Prussia and the resultant tangle of alliances that emerged.

The hostility of the Austrians toward Frederick II, King of Prussia, stemmed from his seizure, and subsequent retention, of Silesia during the First and Second Silesian Wars. Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria, had never abandoned her desire to regain the lost province of Silesia.

Fearful of becoming engaged in a war with Frederick without at least the guaranteed neutrality of the other major land powers on the Continent Maria Theresa attempted to bring about a coalition targeted against Prussia. She

found a willing accomplice in the Czarina of Russia, but made little headway in drawing the other powers into an anti-Prussian alliance until 1756. In January of that year Frederick concluded a neutrality pact with Great Britain. This pact, caused fear and anger in the Court of France.(1) The fear resulted from the obvious British intention of encircling France on the Continent. The anger was from the perceived perfidity of Frederick. Prussia and France had been allies since 1744, and the treaty cementing that alliance was not to have expired until 1756. In fact, at the time Frederick signed the neutrality treaty with England he was engaged in negotiations with the Court of Versailles to extend their alliance.

The French reaction to Frederick's treaty with England was to sign a mutual defense treaty with Austria in May of 1756. The Austrian Chancellor, Kaunitz, building on this success attempted to enlarge the coalition against Prussia. The Czarina of Russia readily embraced the Austrian overture, offering to place troops at the disposal of the coalition.(2) The Elector of Saxony, who was also the King of Poland, however refused the Austrians and steadfastly clung to his neutrality.(3)

This tightening, real or perceived, of the noose around his state convinced Frederick that he had no alternative except to place his armed forces on an operational footing, in essence mobilizing his nation for war. Learning through covert means that Russia would not be prepared to commence hostilities until the spring of 1757 (4) and that Austria

was building up her troop strength in Bohemia Frederick determined that his best course would be to strike first. As he himself later declared:

"After all it was of small importance whether my enemies called me an aggressor or not, as all Europe had already united against me." (5)

To initiate hostilities Frederick chose as his first target Saxony, despite the claims of neutrality offered by the Elector of Saxony. His choice of this state was the result of several considerations. First, he had learned in 1744 that he could not afford to leave a potentially hostile force in his rear when he began open operations against Austria.(6) Second, the Elbe River, which runs through Saxony, would be indispensable as a line of communication for the anticipated operations in Bohemia.(7) (map 1) Finally, on the political-strategic level he anticipated discovering in the Saxon capital the documents that would prove the existence of a coalition aimed at dismembering his state.(8)

Frederick's plan of campaign for 1756 was aimed at achieving a quick victory and a dissolution of the Austrian coalition. He anticipated no resistance from the Saxons and once that area was secured he intended to pass into Bohemia and strike at the unprepared Austrians.(9) It was not unrealistic to expect that Prague could be taken by winter, and that Austria would reconsider her bellicose stance. This being the plan, the operational details of the campaign of 1756 will be examined in detail.

For the subjugation of Saxony Frederick divided his main army (10) into three columns that were to cross into Saxony at separate points and unite in front of Dresden.(11) In conjunction with this main effort, General Schwerin was to utilize the force under him to threaten Bohemia from Silesia. (map 2)

This maneuver was intended to quickly subdue the Saxons, thereby insuring the integrity of Frederick's lines of communications. The force under Schwerin was intended to pose a threat to Austrian Bohemia, and thus prevent the Austrians from marching to the succor of the Saxons in full force. Once Saxony was in Frederick's hands, he planned to quickly march into Bohemia from Saxony while Schwerin did likewise from Silesia.

On the 29th of August the three columns invaded the Electorate of Saxony. The right wing, under Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, marched from Magdeburg through Leipzig and Freiberg toward Dresden. The center column, under the personal command of Frederick, departed Wittengberg, on the left bank of the Elbe River, marched through Torgau and Kesseldorf and thence to Dresden. The left wing, under the Duke of Fevern, had marched from Frankfort am Oder through Elsterwaden and Bautzen to Lohmen.(12) The army was united on the 6th of September near Dresden. At the same time Schwerin made his feint into Bohemia, going as far as Neustadt.(13)

As Frederick's forces advanced into Saxony the Saxon army withdrew in front of it. Due to their numerical

inferiority (approximately 14,000 to the Prussian's 66,000) they did not even contest the occupation of Dresden by Frederick which occurred on 8 September 1756. However, the Elector did not follow the easy route of retreating into Bohemia. Rather the Saxons took up a strong position in the mountainous terrain in the vicinity of Pirna to await relief by the Austrians. From this position they anticipated being able to defend themselves against Frederick's superior force until the Austrians could relieve them.

This unexpected move caused a reevaluation by Frederick. Instead of using his vast superiority to assault the Saxon position, an attack which Napoleon declared "could not have failed", (14) Frederick decided to blockade the Saxons at Pirna while dispatching Marshall Keith, with 32,000 soldiers, to Johnsdorf (also known as Aussig) to block any movement by the Austrians out of Bohemia into Saxony.(15) This decision upset the entire Prussian plan for a quick victory. As Young has stated:

"The whole scheme of conquest, the campaign, even the result of the war depended on a prompt advance into Bohemia, before the Austrians were ready. Frederick ruined his future by this inaction before Pirna. It was the most serious mistake of his military career."(16)

Acting on the direct orders of Maria Theresa to relieve the Saxons at Pirna, the Austrian commander in Bohemia, Marshall Browne, collected his forces and began to march to the aid of the besieged Saxons. By September 23rd Browne had reached Budin, on the Elbe River, in a position to readily

come to the aid of the King of Poland. Frederick, to counter this threat, took two measures. First, he had Schwerin advance to Konniggratz to draw off a portion of the Austrian forces. Second, he took more troops from the blockade of Pirna and personally moved to Johnsdorf. The first action succeeded in its mission because Browne did detach a sizeable force to contain Schwerin.(17) In regards to the second, Frederick arrived at Johnsdorf on 29 September. The next day, September 30, Frederick led the advance guard out from Johnsdorf to find Browne and his army reached the village of Wilmina that day.(18)

That same day, the 30th, Browne crossed the Elbe and established a camp near Lowositz. It was here that the Prussian advance guard found them. On the first of October "Frederick took his generals to show them the ground and explain the plan by which he proposed to attack."(19) (map 3)

Frederick based his original plan on the supposition that Browne was attempting to cross the Elbe in order to turn his left and then go on to relieve the Saxon force at Pirna.(20) Consequently, the plan called for a concentration to push what he felt was the Austrian rear guard into the Elbe with his cavalry.(21) This charge uncovered the falsity of Frederick's assumption and revealed the presence of the entire Austrian army. This lack of adequate intelligence on the location of the Austrian main body turned what was to have been a quick skirmish into a general melee.(22)

By the end of the day the Prussians owned the battlefield and Browne had been forced to withdraw. In terms of absolute losses the battle was about even, the Prussians suffering 3,300 casualties against the Austrian losses of 3,000.(23) At the operational level, however, Frederick achieved his immediate goal of preventing the Austrians from joining with the Saxons at Pirna.

Although Frederick had prevented the immediate juncture of the two forces he had not eliminated the possibility altogether. Marshall Browne, with his army basically intact, was still charged by the Viennese Court with rescuing the forces of the King of Poland. The Austrian commander devised a plan for simultaneous breakout attempt by the Saxons while his army attacked the Prussians from the other direction.(24) However, primarily due to the weather, this attempted relief met with failure and the link up was not accomplished. Frederick, once the Saxons sallied forth from their entrenched camp, was able to force the capitulation of that force. Browne, realizing that his mission was a failure, withdrew into Bohemia where he established his winter quarters.

For his part, Frederick ordered Schwerin out of Bohemia and into winter quarters in Silesia. The main army remained in the vicinity of Dresden for the winter season.(25)

Frederick's failure to achieve his operational objectives in Saxony and Bohemia in 1756 had strategic repercussions. Both the Russian and French Courts reaffirmed their support for Austria, each promising to

provide substantial forces to crush Prussia in 1757.(26) Additionally, Sweden entered into the coalition and the German Diet mobilized the army of the Holy Roman Empire to fight against Frederick. As has been pointed out about Frederick's initiation of hostilities in 1756:

"From fear of encirclement he invaded Saxony, and it was the invasion of Saxony which cemented the coalition by which he was encircled."(27)

With all the major land forces of Europe arrayed against him, Frederick clearly saw that he must seize the initiative rather than allow the coalition time to assemble its formidable forces.(28)

"Unable to provide adequate means of defense at all points where attack was threatened, Frederick resolved to concentrate his forces against his principal antagonist and to strike a severe blow at Austria as early in the year as possible."(29)

Frederick's plan for striking this blow consisted of marching on Prague, in Austrian Bohemia, and quickly seizing it. Afterwards a portion of his army would be sent to Hanover to assist in dealing with the French, while the remainder marched on Vienna and thereby end the war within the year.(30) For as Frederick understood, to eliminate the Austrians from the war would mean the dissolution of the anti-Prussian alliance. As he later stated:

"I relied on this great maneuver throwing the plans of the enemy into great confusion... and might even lead to a decisive action which would fix the fate of the rest of the war."(31)

In order to compound this confusion Frederick realized that operational surprise was essential. To convince the Austrians that he was adopting a defensive posture he had his troops continue to construct fortified positions in Saxony. Since this would appear to be his most prudent move the Austrians were deceived as to his actual intentions.(32)

The true plan, the invasion of Bohemia, called for the simultaneous movement of four corps into Bohemia. These corps were lead by Frederick, Bevern, Schwerin and Prince Maurice of Saxony. Once in Bohemia the four forces were to combine into two and march on Prague along both banks of the Elbe.(33) (map 4)

The four corps begin movement from their winter quarters in late March and early April and made their march into Bohemia with little opposition. By the second of May Frederick, now joined with Maurice, had reached the vicinity of Prague while the combined forces of Schwerin and Bevern were still some distance away.(34) Fortunately Prince Charles of Lorraine, who had replaced Marshall Browne, chose not to attack the widely separated columns but rather withdrew his forces to Prague as the Prussians advanced.

Upon retiring to Prague Prince Charles established himself upon the heights outside of the city to await the arrival of additional troops from Bohemia under Marshall Daun.(35) Frederick did not attempt to molest Prince Charles until the arrival of the remainder of his forces under Schwerin.

The joining of the Prussian armies occurred on 5 May 1757 and gave Frederick numerical equality with the Austrians. Knowing that his success depended upon speed, Frederick elected to attack the Austrians on 6 May despite the fact that the troops under Schwerin had been forced marched for the last three days.

Early on the morning of the sixth Frederick and Schwerin rode forward to reconnoiter the Austrian positions. This completed, they rode back to organize the army for the impending attack. Judging from his reconnaissance that the Austrian center and right could not be forced Frederick devised a plan which called for an assault on the Austrian right wing while refusing his own right. (map 5)

Shortly after the Prussian army began its movement toward the Austrian right wing it was detected, which allowed Prince Charles time to reinforce that flank before the attack was launched.(36) General Schwerin, leading the Prussian left wing, assaulted this reinforced position with nearly disastrous results. The Prussians, attacking into the Austrian artillery, were driven back with heavy losses. Schwerin rallied his mauled troops for a second assault which was more successful.(37)

"Meanwhile a wide gap was opening at the crucial angle between the main Austrian army, which was still facing north, and those regiments which had been moved to the southeast and had fought to such affect against Winterfeldt and Schwerin. Now that the enemy had pulled itself off balance Frederick threw eighteen battalions into the breach and cut the Austrian host in two."(38)

This splintering of the Austrian force decided the day for the Prussians. Prince Charles, with about half of his remaining force, withdrew into the city of Prague. The remainder of the Austrian army escaped to the south to join the forces of Daun, who were only some eighteen miles away.(39) Learning of the Prussian victory Daun retired to a camp near the village of Kolin, while Frederick directed his attention to taking the city.(40)

Lacking the combat power to take Prague by storm, Frederick elected to take it by siege, despite the fact that success, at both the operational and strategic levels, depended upon speed. To protect himself from Daun Frederick detached Bevern with a large corps, some 25,000 troops, to observe the movements of this Austrian army.(41) Here matters rested until the second week of June.

During these weeks of inactivity Daun was able to reorganize and reinforce his army which now numbered approximately 60,000.(42) On June 12 Daun sent word to Prince Charles that he would attack the besieging army on the 20th and that Charles was to sally forth the same day in order to crush the Prussians between them.(43) Also on the 12th Daun initiated offensive action against Bevern, who was forced to fall back in the face of the overwhelming superiority of the Austrians.

This move convinced Frederick that he had to take action or risk annihilation.

"In order to take Prague and the army

within it, it became essential to retain Daun at a distance; for the troops employed in surrounding the city... would have succumbed to a frontal and rear attack conducted together. This important consideration decided me to go in person at the head of a detachment to the assistance of Bevern, who, with a small force, had been attempting to keep Daun at bay."(44)

Accordingly, Frederick, with a small detachment of about 9,000 men from the besieging force, departed Prague on the 13th and joined forces with Bevern the next day. In front of them, at Kolin, was the entrenched camp of Daun.

While the tactics of the Battle of Kolin are beyond the scope of this study, a brief look at Frederick's plan for the battle, and the execution of it is appropriate. (map 6) Essentially, Frederick's plan of attack was identical to that for the Battle of Prague. He attacked the Austrian right flank while refusing his own right wing.(45) On the morning of June 18, 1757 Frederick attempted to execute his plan. However several things went awry. First, Daun correctly interpreted what the Prussian intentions were and was able to reinforce his threatened wing in time. Thus the assault on the Austrian right was easily thrown back. Second, the Prussian right wing, which was to have been refused, became prematurely involved in the battle.(46) This deprived Frederick of any reserves with which to influence the course of events. The final result was a devastating defeat for the Prussians. As Frederick remarked "Twenty three battalions were not sufficient to drive 60,000 men from their entrenchments."(47)

Considering the results, both immediate and long term, of the Battle of Kolin the question is whether or not it should have been fought. The King of Prussia steadfastly claimed that it was for reasons both operational and strategic. One operational reason, as outlined above, was to prevent the destruction of the Prussian army between two Austrian forces. Frederick was to later outline the strategic necessity of the battle as follows:

"An all important reason made a definite decision advisable. Had I won another victory I should have appeared to have a complete superiority over the enemy and the Princes of the Empire in consequence would have remained neutral. The French, finding their calculations incorrect, might have ceased operations in Germany, while the Swedes would likewise have become more pacific and circumspect, and even the Court of Petrograde might have reconsidered its policy. It was this consideration that decided me to attack Daun's camp." (48)

The victory was not won, however, and the hoped for fruit could not be harvested.

If Frederick could not enjoy his harvest, the Austrians threw away the chance to reap the benefits of their victory. Daun, instead of pursuing the retreating Prussians, returned to his camp, where he was to remain for several days. (49) This procrastination allowed Frederick to raise the siege of Prague and retreat across the Elbe. The two Prussian forces, the one from Prague and the other from Kolin, were reunited at Leitmeritz. (50) From this position Frederick could either block an Austrian advance into Saxony or move against the combined French and Imperial forces that were

menacing his domains from the west. (map 7)

Prince Charles, having been joined by Daun, did not depart Prague in pursuit of the Prussians until the 24th of June.(51) To forestall their movement into Saxony Frederick dispatched his brother, William, with 34,000 soldiers. This small force was forced to withdraw northward by the Austrian army, now numbering some 93,000.(52) In doing so William was maneuvered away from the important magazine of Zittau which he had been charged with protecting. Thereby "leaving open the way to either Saxony or Silesia, as Prince Charles might choose."(53)

Rather than leave the initiative in the hands of his opponent, Frederick reunited his forces and marched in late July to engage Charles in battle.(54) He was to spend the first three weeks of August 1757 in a vain attempt to draw Charles into battle on favorable terms. Prince Charles, however, refused to take the bait and continuously maneuvered away from the Prussians.(55) The situation was thus stalemated on 20 August when events in the west forced Frederick to turn his attention to that theater.

In order to understand the rationale for Frederick's rapid movement to the west an appreciation of the strategic situation is necessary. In the north a French army had crossed the Rhine into Hanover and defeated the English controlled forces lead by the Duke of Cumberland on 26 July.(56) The Swedes were in Pomerania and edging toward Brandenburg, and on the 11th of August 100,000 Russian soldiers had crossed into East Prussia.(57) Meanwhile a

second French army under Marshal Soubise had united with the Imperial forces at Erfurt. Judging this combined Franco-German Army to be the most dangerous Frederick resolved to deal with it first.

Accordingly, Frederick set out on August 25th to meet this new threat.(58) However, since Prince Charles was still in the field and a potent danger to southern Saxony and Silesia, he left the bulk of his Silesian army there under Bevern to contain the Austrians in the vicinity of Zittau. During his march toward Erfurt he was able to augment his small force with additional troops that had been left in Saxony to defend that province. (map 8)

Also during this march Frederick learned of two changes in the general strategic situation. The first was of the Battle of Jaegerndorf in East Prussia that occurred on 30 August. Although this battle did not result in a decisive victory for either the Prussians or the Russians, the Russian commander elected to withdraw from East Prussia after this fight.(59) This allowed the Prussian army in that theater to concentrate solely on the Swedes in Pomerania. The second change was not so favorable for the Prussians. With the departure of Frederick, Prince Charles had taken the offensive against Bevern driving him back into Silesia. Once again time was not on the side of Frederick, he had to deal with combined French-German forces before the Austrians could completely overrun Silesia.

A speedy resolution to the problem in the west was not forth coming however. Frederick's arrival at Erfurt on 12

September caused some alarm in the French-German camp. They had been working on the assumption that since Frederick was seemingly tied down in Bohemia he would not have neither the time nor the means to oppose them.(60) By his rapid movement, covering 170 miles in twelve days, Frederick had disproved their assumptions.

The alarm caused by Frederick's unexpected arrival was soon transmitted into action. The action chosen by Soubise was to withdraw from Erfurt to Eisenach.(61) For over a month events were to follow a similar pattern, every time the Prussians advanced the combined army would withdraw without offering battle. This series of moves and counter moves was finally broken in mid-October by events in Berlin.

The events that triggered this change in the situation was a movement by an Austrian force on Berlin. Fearful that this move could be part of a joint Austrian-Swedish effort to take Berlin and split his kingdom, Frederick immediately set out for Berlin with the bulk of the force under his immediate command. Behind him he left the balance of his army under General Keith at Leipzig to observe the combined army.(62) The Austrians did occupy his capital on 16 October with a small cavalry force.(63) After exacting some tribute from the inhabitants of the city the force beat a hasty retreat for Austrian territories. During his march to Berlin Frederick was appraised of the true nature of the raid on the city. He immediately turned his forces back toward Leipzig in order to deal with the threat posed by the Franco-German army.

During his absence, this combined army had crossed the Saale and had surrounded Keith at Leipzig. The King's approach on Leipzig during the last week of October caused Soubise to fall back from that position.

"It seemed as if the terrible game of delay were about to be played again. In such a game Frederick, whose only hope lay in staking his all on a battle, could not but lose."(64)

After joining with Keith, Frederick set out from Leipzig on 30 October determined to engage Soubise before winter brought an end to active campaigning. However, as was to be expected, Soubise had continued to fall back and by this time was back across the Saale.

Frederick realized that he could not allow the combined army to take up winter quarters on his border. This would put them in an advantageous position in the spring to attack into Saxony, at the same time the Austrians could be expected to renew their activities from the east.(65) The King knew that he had to defeat Soubise or be crushed between the two forces.

As the combined army had withdrawn they had left small detachments on the Saale at the crossing sites of Hulle, Meresberg and Weissenfels, while the majority of the force concentrated near Mucheln.(66) On the 31st of October Frederick seized the crossing sites and began crossing his force at all three locations. By November 2nd these columns were reunited and the enemy position located. The Prussians spent the next two days maneuvering in order to be in

position to attack the positions occupied by Soubise, and on the evening of the fourth they were encamped near Rossbach. (map 9)

The commanders of the combined army interpreted these maneuvers as an indication that Frederick was preparing to retire due to the overwhelming numerical superiority enjoyed by the French and Germans.(67) They therefore made plans to attack the supposedly retreating Prussian force. Their plan called for a small corps to be sent out "to amuse the enemy and cover the march of the army." (68) This march of the rest of the army was to take it around the Prussian position so that it could be attacked from the flank.

Late in the morning of 5 November the combined army began its maneuver. Frederick's own words best describe his actions upon detecting the movement of his enemy.

"I sent reconnoitering units in all directions and waited quietly in my camp until the enemy's intentions should be more clearly known. The reports of these observation parties now false, now correct maintained a feeling of uncertainty until noon, when the front of the French column was seen in the distance to be turning the left flank of the Prussians. I went myself to reconnoiter the march of Soubise and was convinced.(69)

Once convinced Frederick swiftly put his forces into motion to attack the moving columns. The resulting attack quickly reduced the allied column into a mass of fleeing soldiers who were closely pursued by the Prussian cavalry. In fact, "far more of the allies were cut down in the pursuit than in the actual combat." (70)

While eliminating the French and Imperial forces from the war at least temporarily, the Battle of Rossbach did not provide Frederick a decided advantage in the conduct of the war. As he was later to recount in his memoirs:

"The Battle of Rossbach merely allowed the King freedom to go and look for new dangers in Silesia. The only importance of this victory was the impression it had on the French and on the wreckage of the Duke of Cumberland's army." (71)

The impression that was made on the French was to be transitory for they were to remain in the war until the end. The effect on the Hanoverians, however, was of greater strategic value to Frederick. This victory persuaded George II of England to reenter the war on the Continent with the proviso that one of the Prussian generals, Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, assume command of his forces there. (72) This Frederick readily agreed to since it served to protect his borders and would force the French to divide their attention between Hanover and Saxony.

Frederick headed for his new dangers in Silesia on 14 November 1757, leaving behind a force at Leipzig under Prince Henry. He also ordered Keith to make an incursion into Bohemia in an attempt to draw some of the Austrians out of Silesia. During his rapid march to the east Frederick was informed of two setbacks that had occurred in Silesia. The first was the taking of the important magazine at Schweidnitz on 16 November and the subsequent withdrawal of Bevern to Breslau. (73) The second was the defeat of Bevern while enroute to Breslau and the subsequent capitulation of

the garrison on 25 November.(74) Frederick's summation of the situation and the options open to him provides insight into the events that were to shortly transpire.

"The whole of Silesia now lay at the disposal of the Austrians, so that there was not a moment to be lost; either the Austrians would have to be attacked immediately and thrust out of Silesia; or else it would be necessary to reconcile oneself to the loss of Silesia."(75)

Frederick arrived at Parchwitz on 28 November having covered 200 miles in thirteen days.(76) Within four days the remnants of Bevern's force had joined him, raising his effective strength to 43,000.(77)

Having rested his foot-sore soldiers and reorganized the army, Frederick set out for Neumark on 4 December to confront an Austrian force of 80,000 encamped at Leuthen.(78) On the morning of the fifth the advance guard, under the personal command of Frederick, marched from Neumark to determine the exact position of the Austrians. This force ran into the Austrian outposts at Borne and quickly routed them.(79) From this village Frederick was able to observe the Austrian positions and develop his plan of battle. (map 10)

Frederick's basic plan was one now familiar, to attack with one wing while refusing the other. In this particular case he elected to attack with the right and refuse his left.(80) Critical to the success of the plan was the fixing of the Austrians right wing. To accomplish this Frederick developed a deception plan whereby his left wing

was to make a demonstration in front of the Austrian right while the major portion of his forces maneuvered to take the Austrians from their left flank.(81)

This deception plan worked beyond reasonable expectation. Not only did it fix the Austrian right wing but it also caused Daun and Prince Charles to commit their reserves to this sector.(82) This, coupled with the tactical surprise achieved by the Prussian left wing, lead to the piecemeal defeat of the Austrian army at Leuthen.

The result of the Prussian victory at Leuthen was the retirement of the Austrian army from Silesia, with one notable exception. This exception being the fortress city of Schweidnitz.(83) Having driven the Austrians and French from his territory Frederick retired to winter quarters to plan the campaign of 1758.

The campaign of 1758 started early, if indeed one could say that there had been a cessation of hostilities for the winter. In January 1758 the Russians renewed their assault on East Prussia and shortly there after sent raiding parties of Cossacks into Pomerania.(84) During this same period Prince Ferdinand was also engaged in driving the remainder of the French forces from Hanover, while the Imperial German forces advanced through Franconia into Bohemia to link up with the Austrian forces there.(85)

Despite these distractions Frederick still considered the Austrians his most dangerous opponent and made his campaign plan accordingly. This plan called for the retaking of Schweidnitz followed by a rapid move into

Moravia. Once in Moravia he would quickly take the city of Olmutz and use it as a base of supply from which to threaten Vienna itself.(86) This move had three salient features to recommend it. First it would draw the Austrians further away from both Silesia and Saxony. Second, Daun was expecting Frederick to renew his operations in Bohemia and had made his dispositions accordingly.(87) Thus by striking at Moravia Frederick would be striking at the enemy's weakness while achieving the same operational and strategic results. The third feature was that if the Prussians met defeat in Moravia they could easily withdraw into Silesia and assume a defensive posture.(88)

The first portion of the campaign, the recapture of Schweidnitz, went as planned. In mid-March the Prussian army left its winter quarters in Breslau and by the first of April had reached Schweidnitz. The Austrian garrison there held out until 15 April when it was forced to capitulate.(89) During the siege Frederick dispatched a small force under General Zeithen toward Bohemia, to further the idea that he would indeed be renewing his offensive on that province.(90)

Daun believed that Zeithen's force was in fact the advance guard of the Prussian army and began to move troops to block their entry. To further this concentration of Austrian forces in Bohemia when Frederick departed Schweidnitz he marched southeast through Neisse then turned southwest as if headed toward Bohemia, but instead rapidly turned his force south and by 12 May had reached Olmutz.(91)

The Austrian force assigned the mission of guarding Moravia had withdrawn in front of the advancing Prussians and shut themselves up in the city. Since Olmutz sits astride the lines of communication from Silesia to Moravia Frederick was faced with the task of taking the fortress before he could continue operations. Lacking a sufficient number of troops to take the city by storm Frederick was forced to besiege it. By 20 May the blockade of Olmutz was established and the Prussian army firmly established around the city.(92) Daun, for his part, had moved into Moravia and "lurked dangerously in the neighborhood with the Austrian army of relief."(93) Daun's intention was not to hazard a battle with Frederick but to attempt to slip reinforcements into the town and to cut Frederick's lines of communication with Silesia.

As the siege continued into June Frederick's reliance on these lines of communication became more pronounced. As General Keith, one of Frederick's ablest subordinates, wrote toward the end of June 1758.

"We had by no means a true idea of the place or of the garrison; and that, consequently, we had not brought with us enough ammunition to take it. This obliged the King to order a great convoy from Silesia... The enemy, who perceived that everything depended upon the arrival of this convoy, and, who, being in their own country, were well informed of every step we took collected several bodies of men, which had already been posted in the mountains cutting off our communication with Silesia."(94)

The great convoy, numbering 4,000 wagons and several

thousand escort troops, was intercepted and destroyed on June 30th.(95) Daun in conjuncture with the movement on the convoy, had maneuvered his relief force closer to Olmutz. The destruction of the convoy, and the movement of Daun, placed Frederick in a precarious situation. Without the badly needed supplies he could neither continue the siege nor risk battle with Daun.

In this precarious position two routes of withdrawal were open to Frederick. The first was the direct route back to Silesia, while the second lead into Bohemia. This latter course offered several advantages to the King chief of which was that it would take the war into enemy territory.(96)

Ordering the siege raised on the night of July first, Frederick adroitly "turned his retreat into an advance and marched into Bohemia."(97) By the 14th of July he had managed to extricate his entire force from Moravia and establish a strong position at Konniggratz.(98) Daun followed the Prussians at a leisurely pace arriving before Konniggratz, on the opposite side of the Elbe, on 22 July.(99) Frederick, in his History of the Seven Years War, leaves us an account of his decision to quit Bohemia at this time.

"If the Austrians had been now the only persons in question, the campaign might easily have been concluded without leaving Bohemia. But the invasion with which the Russians menaced Pomerania and the New March of Brandenburg obliged the King to march his troops into Silesia in order to convey assistance to those points which were most in need of it."(100)

Frederick began his march to Silesia on July 28th (101) and by the tenth of August had arrived at Lanshut. Leaving Keith with half of his army to defend Silesia, Frederick departed with a small detachment of 14,000 troops for Frankfort am Oder on the eleventh. Ten days later he arrived at Frankfort.

At Frankfort Frederick joined with his local commander, Count Dohna, who had been successful in keeping the Russians from crossing the Oder.(102) On 22 August the Prussian force, totaling 30,000, crossed the Oder and advanced on the Russians. As the Prussians advanced the Russian commander, General Fremor, entrenched his troops at Zorndorf. By the twenty-fourth both armies had taken up positions within sight of the other, the Russians at Zorndorf and the Prussians at Darmitzel.(103)

Due to their relative initial positions, Darmitzel being to the north of the Russian position, Fremor expected the Prussians to attack from this direction. However, Frederick determining that a frontal attack could not succeed resolved to flank the Russians and attack them from the south. Once there the plan called for an attack by the Prussian left wing with the right wing being refused.(104) (map 11)

The Prussians began their circuitous march in the pre-dawn hours of 25 August. In the course of their march they passed close to the site of Fremor's baggage train, the destruction of which would have made the Russian position untenable. "But the king's impatient temper and contempt

for the enemy made him ignore the favorable opportunity. He intended to show that the Russians could not face his troops."(105) Not only did his contempt of the Russians cause him to miss this opportunity, but Frederick's maneuvers in the face of the enemy allowed Fremor ample opportunity to reposition the majority of his forces to the south.

Thus when the Prussians finally attacked they were compelled into making a frontal attack rather than the flanking attack that had been planned. The Battle of Zorndorf quickly devolved into a melee that was "ended by exhaustion and darkness, not by any maneuver, not because either side was mentally tired of killing."(106)

With the coming of darkness the armies withdrew slightly and the battle ended. Once again strategic considerations prevented Frederick from pursuing the tactical and operational advantage he had gained over the Russians. As he later explained

"It was necessary for me now to hasten to the help of my brother, Prince Henry, who needed me in Saxony, and for that reason I was unable to push the advantages further, which I had gained over the Russians."(108)

The cause of Prince Henry's call for help was the worsening situation in both Silesia and Saxony. With the departure of Frederick in July Daun had developed a plan that called for a simultaneous advance into both provinces. This plan called for a converging attack by the Imperial forces and the main Austrian army on Dresden to crush Henry,

while a second Austrian force drove into Silesia to capture Neisse.(109)

The execution of this concept went as planned with one exception. This exception was that Prince Henry was able to retire to the heights near Dresden without being crushed.(110) This was the general situation as Frederick departed for Dresden on 2 September. Averaging 22 miles per day he was able to link up with Henry on 12 September.(111)

As Frederick approached, Daun, cautious as ever, retired for Stolpen. For the next month the Prussians attempted to maneuver Daun out of Saxony, while he sought to prevent Frederick from having free access between Saxony and Silesia.(112) General Keith aptly summed up the situation on 12 October 1758:

"The King has obliged Marshal Daun to quit his position of Stolpen, and, consequently, his communication with the Elbe, and to retire towards Zittau, where we have pursued him step by step, but without ever having had an opportunity of engaging a combat."(113)

Keith wrote this letter from the Prussian camp at Hochkirchen, and the longing for combat was not far off. Frederick had established this position on the tenth of October despite the fact that the Austrian army was encamped less than a mile away at Kittlitz and occupied the heights commanding the Prussian camp.(114) One of the primary reasons Frederick felt secure in his position was his unwarranted contempt for the generalship of Daun.(115) He sincerely believed that Daun was incapable of, or unwilling

to, attack him.

Daun, however, proved himself both capable and willing to engage Frederick in battle. During the night of 14 October he set his forces into motion for a double envelopment of the Prussian position at Hochkirchen. (map 12) At first light the two wings launched an attack on the unprepared Prussians and completely routed them. During the retreat Frederick was able to restore order to his disorganized units and the rout turned into a withdrawal. He was aided in this by Daun who

"quietly permitted the King to withdraw, and instead of pursuing him unremittingly, he perfected the entrenchments of Kittlitz, to which camp he should never have returned." (116)

The defeat at Hochkirchen placed Frederick in a difficult situation. The Austrian force that had previously entered Silesia was besieging the important city of Neisse. This city would not be able to hold out for much longer unless it received help from Saxony. (117) The capture of Neisse would make the Austrians the masters of Silesia, which Frederick could not tolerate if he were to continue to prosecute the war. (118) Calling for reinforcements from Dresden, Frederick set out to relieve the city on 23 October 1758.

Frederick based his plan for this relief action on three key elements. (119) First, his knowledge of the character and motivation of Daun. Second, his faith in the greater relative mobility of his army over than of the

Austrians. Third, the well founded hope that Dresden could hold out against Daun for at least three weeks. Essentially Frederick's plan was to march into Silesia, raise the siege of Neisse and return to Saxony before Daun had the opportunity to take Dresden.

As previously mentioned Frederick set out for Neisse on 23 October. Slipping past the forces Daun had placed to block his movement he reached Neisse on 5 November and raised the siege.(120) Upon Frederick's departure Daun had advanced on the force left to cover Saxony, who retired into Dresden. This garrison was able to maintain itself until November 15th when Daun, hearing that Frederick was returning from Silesia, broke off the siege of Dresden.(121)

Daun, after departing Dresden, withdrew into Bohemia. On the 20th of November Frederick reentered Dresden. The next day the "army was ordered to expel the Austrian detachments remaining in Saxony and go into winter quarters."(122)

FREDERICK AS AN OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

In looking for the principles employed by Frederick as a commander at the operational level of war the most difficult task is to separate the three personalities of Frederick. That is, when is Frederick acting as the architect of strategy as the King; as the operational commander of large military forces engaged in a campaign to

secure strategic goals; and, finally, when is he functioning as a general on the tactical level. In summarizing the campaigns of 1756, 1757 and 1758 an attempt was made to describe Frederick's moves at the operational level. The details of the tactical battles, while illustrative of Frederick's abilities at this level, were deliberately glossed over. Likewise Frederick as the formulator of national strategy has not been given much space. In examining the role of the King as, to use a modern phrase, a theater commander, several constant operating principles have become apparent. These principles will be addressed in the pages that follow.

The principle that Frederick enthusiastically and continuously embraced was that of retention of the initiative. Writing to his generals before the outbreak of the war, he declared:

"I should say that in general the first of two army commanders who adopts an offensive attitude almost always reduces his rival to the defensive and makes him proceed in consonance with the movements of the former."(123)

His preference for offensive action stemmed in part from his feelings concerning adoption of a defensive posture.

"Projects of absolute defense are not practicable because while seeking to place yourself in strong camps the enemy will envelope you, deprive you of your supplies from the rear and oblige you to lose ground."(124)

Jomini attributes Frederick's continuous striving to maintain the initiative to another cause.(125) To him it

was because the Prussians were a numerically inferior army. To survive it could not be on the defensive, it had to foil the designs of the enemy before he attacked.

Whatever the root cause of Frederick's desire to retain the initiative, it is amply demonstrated in the first three years of the Seven Years War. It is seen in Frederick's choice of where and when to initiate hostilities in 1756, and again demonstrated in his opening moves of the campaigns of 1757 and 1758. It is likewise evident in his decision to advance into Bohemia in 1758 after being forced to raise the siege of Olmutz. It is also seen in his movement to engage the Austrians at Kolin, even if this battle did not provide the results desired.

The second factor on which Frederick based many of his decisions was the relative superiority in mobility enjoyed by the Prussian army. While most historians have dwelled on the impact of this superiority at the tactical level, such as at Leuthen, it was not less important at the operational level. This mobility of the Prussian army allowed Frederick to confound his opponents by being where they least expected him. A prime example of these was Soubise who being at Erfurt did not believe that it would be possible for Frederick to disengage himself from the action in Bohemia in time to thwart his designs on Saxony. That Frederick was able to do so was due in large measure to the capability of his army to cover large distances at a great pace. As previously mentioned, Frederick's faith in the mobility of his army allowed him to plan and execute the relief of

Neisse after the Battle of Hochkirchen before serious repercussions could be felt in Saxony.

Closely tied to the concept of mobility was Frederick's idea of the reason one maneuvered large forces. To him the purpose of maneuver was not to gain ground, but to force the enemy to give battle under conditions favorable to the Prussians.(126) This ran counter to the traditional military thinking of the age that argued that battles, and campaigns, could be won by maneuver alone. To these traditionalists Frederick replied "Battles are necessary to decide a conflict."(127)

In order to plan and fight battles, however, Frederick believed that an appreciation of terrain was essential. As he wrote in his Instructions

"Knowledge of the country is to a general what a rifle is to an infantryman, and what the rules of arithmetic are to a geometrician. If he does not know the country he will do nothing but make gross mistakes. Without this knowledge his projects, be they otherwise admirable, become ridiculous and often impracticable".(128)

By knowing the country an able commander would be able to choose the place of battle that best suited him. This choice of the ground had to be taken with "regard to the numbers and types of his troops and the strength of the enemy".(129) This concern should, according to Frederick, be the first concern of the commander, while the actual arrangement of the troops for the battle is second.(130)

However, if one is to select the field of battle based on terrain and enemy, one must have adequate intelligence on

both in order to make the most favorable selection. In both areas Frederick was often inadequately informed. In the area of terrain, he began soon after the Second Silesian War to compile maps on Moravia, Bohemia, and Saxony.(131) The cartography of the age, however, was extremely primitive. Thus the maps he compiled showed the locations of villages and roads fairly accurately, but had no adequate means of representing broken ground and hills. Likewise, all but the best maps were poor at indicating the nature and extent of swamps and forests.(132) Despite Frederick's best efforts, the Prussian army rarely went into battle with a detailed knowledge of the terrain over which they would be operating. The Battle of Kolin is fairly typical of this problem. As Frederick was issuing his order for the impending fight, he announced "Gentlemen, many of you must still remember this neighborhood from the time when we stood here in 1742".(133) The events of the day were to prove how many of his commanders did not remember.

Another essential ingredient in selecting the time and place in which to fight is timely, accurate information about the enemy. On the strategic level Frederick, through the use of spies and paid informants, was able to keep current on the plans of his adversaries. However, during the course of a campaign he often had difficulty in obtaining reliable information on the opposing force.

A primary reason for this lack of intelligence on the enemy was that the Prussian cavalry was neither organized nor trained to collect this information. Coupled with the

effectiveness of the Austrian light cavalry in intercepting Prussian patrols, this seriously degraded Fredericks ability to learn of his foe's movements. A secondary reason for this lack of information was that the inhabitants of Bohemia, Moravia and other areas in which he operated refused to provide it to him.(134) Thus the Prussian army often had to wait for the enemy to make his presence known, or, even worse, they were forced to follow in the tracks of a hostile force.

It will be remembered that the only reason one sought information on the enemy was to enable you to bring him to battle, for only through battle would conflicts be decided. If battles are necessary to decide a conflict the exploitation of these of battles is one of the prime duties placed on the operational commander. The successful commander at this level must utilize not only the fruits of victory but also overcome the setbacks of defeat to insure that his campaign achieves the objectives established by strategy. This Frederick was able to do. Victory at Rossbach achieved the strategic goal of keeping the French out of Saxony while enabling Frederick to return and deal with the Austrians at Leuthen. Prevented from entering Moravia by his reversal at Olmutz Frederick nonetheless turned it into an opportunity by advancing into Bohemia. Likewise he was able to turn his defeat at Hochkrichen into a success. Despite this defeat he was able to stop the Austrian advance into Silesia and also managed to clear Saxony by years end.

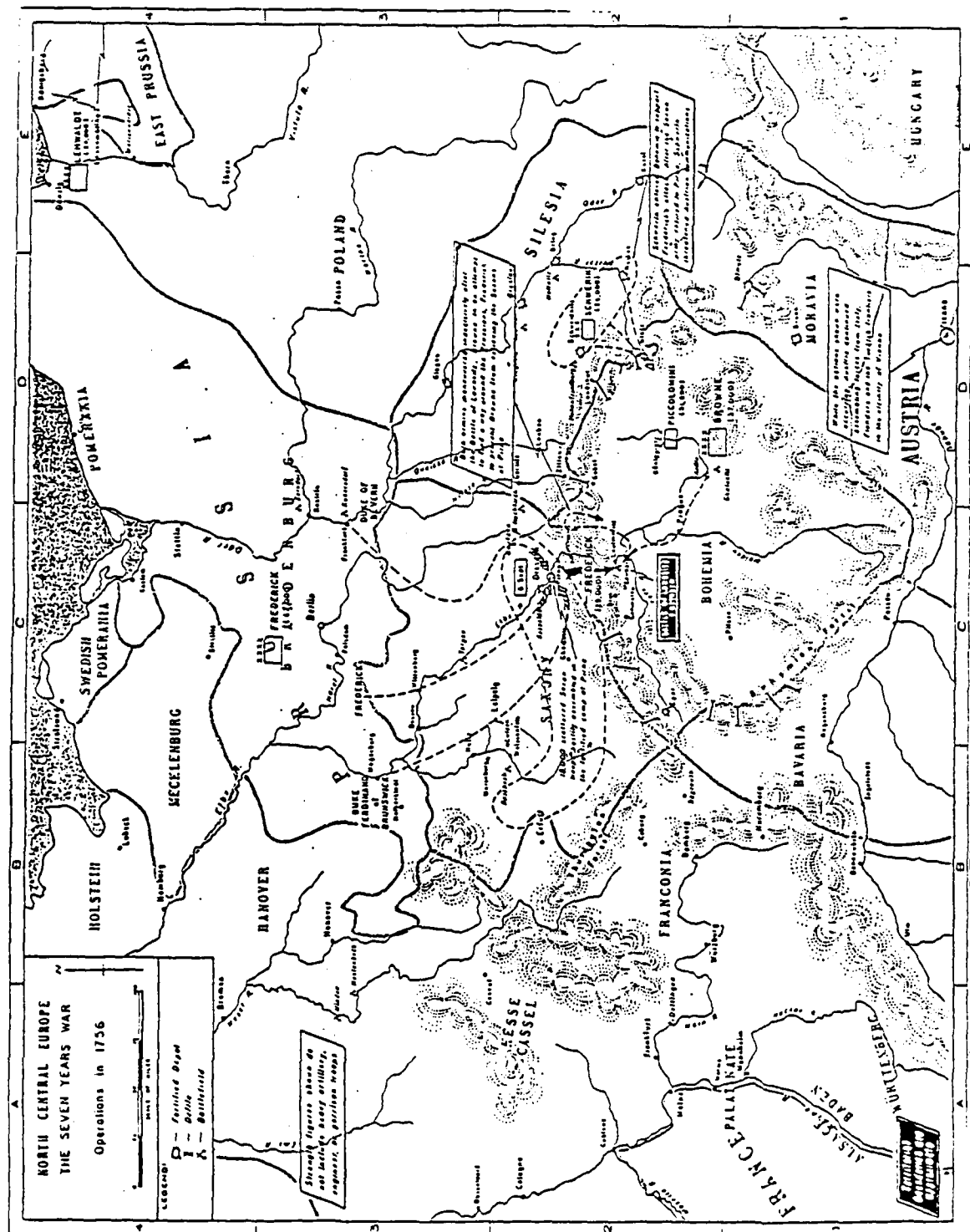
Another principle that appears to have guided Frederick's decision making was to strike at the enemy's weakness, not his strength. While this is more readily apparent at the tactical level, as was attempted at Lowositz and at Leuthen, it does manifest itself at the operational level. It was this principle in operation that caused Frederick to invade Moravia and not Bohemia in 1758.

Closely tied to this concept of striking at enemy weak points is that of deception. It is pointless to aim at the foe's weakness if he is able to divine your intent. Frederick's understanding of the importance of deception is again illustrated in the invasion of Moravia. His maneuvers with small detachments and the subsequent oblique approach of the main Prussian force all worked to convince Daun that the main attack would be into Bohemia, not Moravia.

Finally, a comment on a technique employed by Frederick to great advantage. This technique was his habit of commanding from the front. At the strategic level this meant that he was in the theater most critical to the achievement of the strategic goals. As an operational commander this translated into being where the decisive action would occur, as in going to Kolin rather than staying at Prague. Even at the tactical level Frederick often led the advance guard, as at Leuthen. By being at the front Frederick, in all three roles, was able to stay in touch with a changing situation and thereby make rapid decisions as to which course of action to pursue.

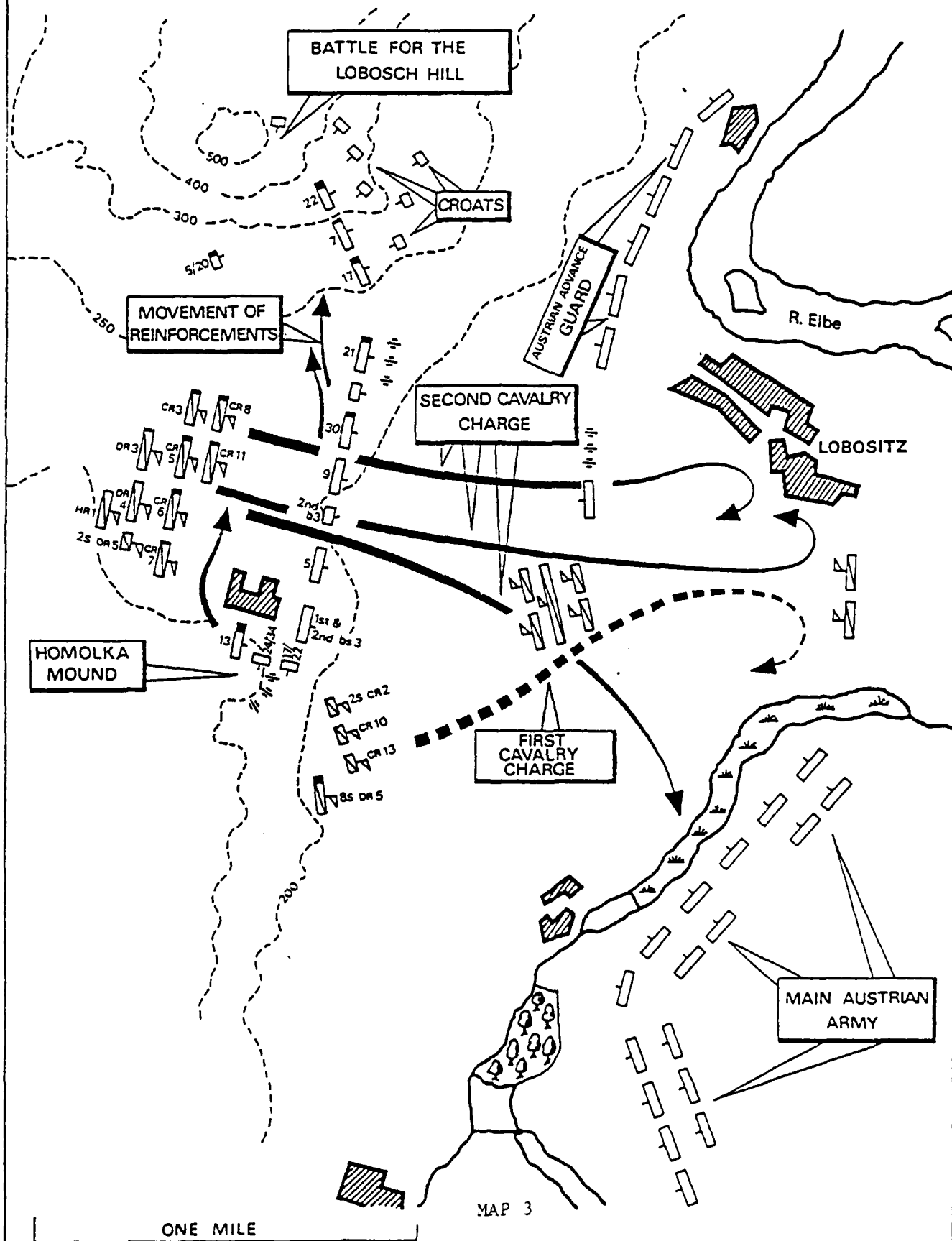
These then are the principles that guided Frederick's

decision making at the operational level. An analysis of the classic principles of war has not been included since the evidence seems to indicate that he understood and applied them at all three levels of war.

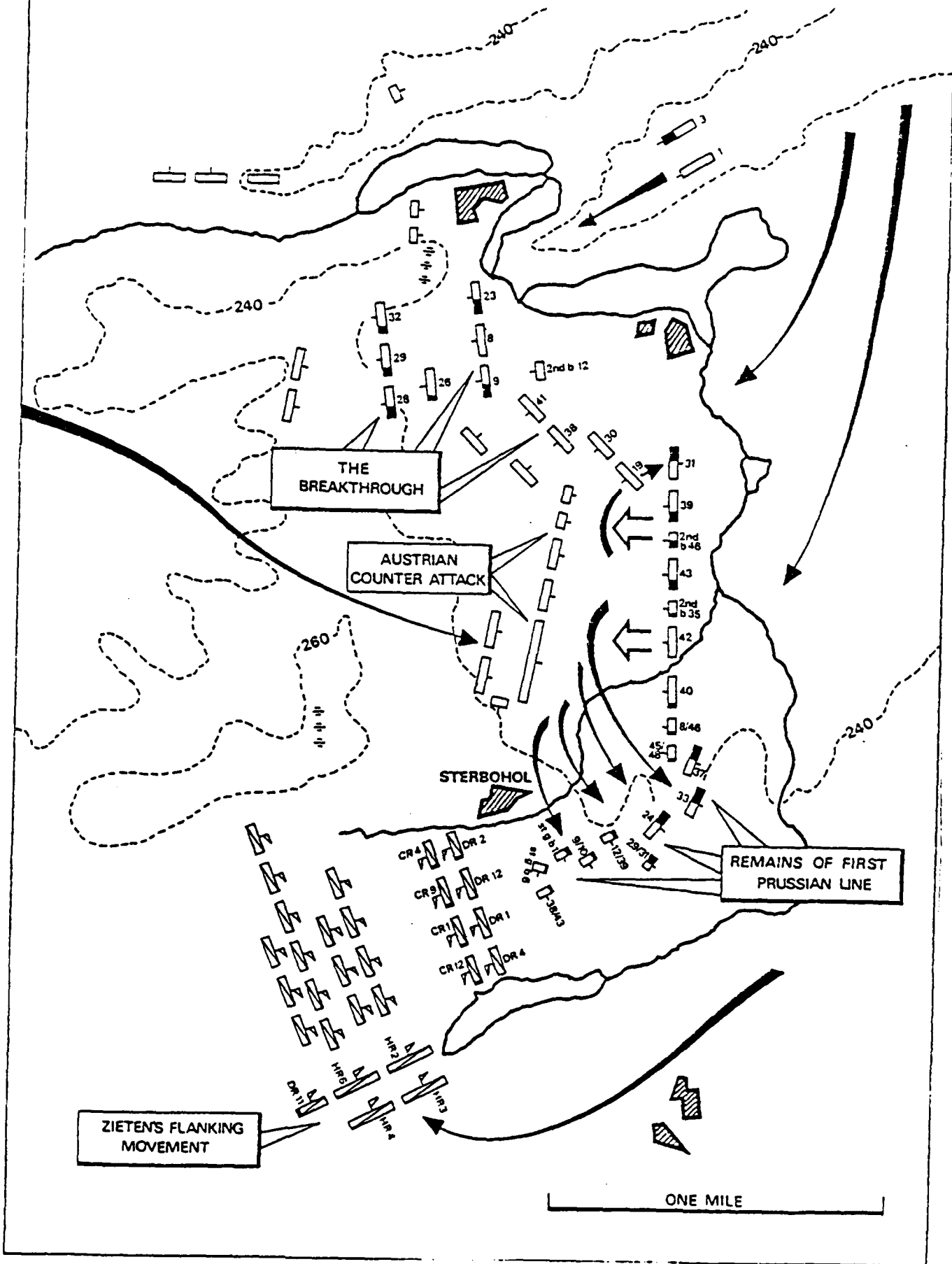


MAP 2

LOBOSITZ, 1 October 1756

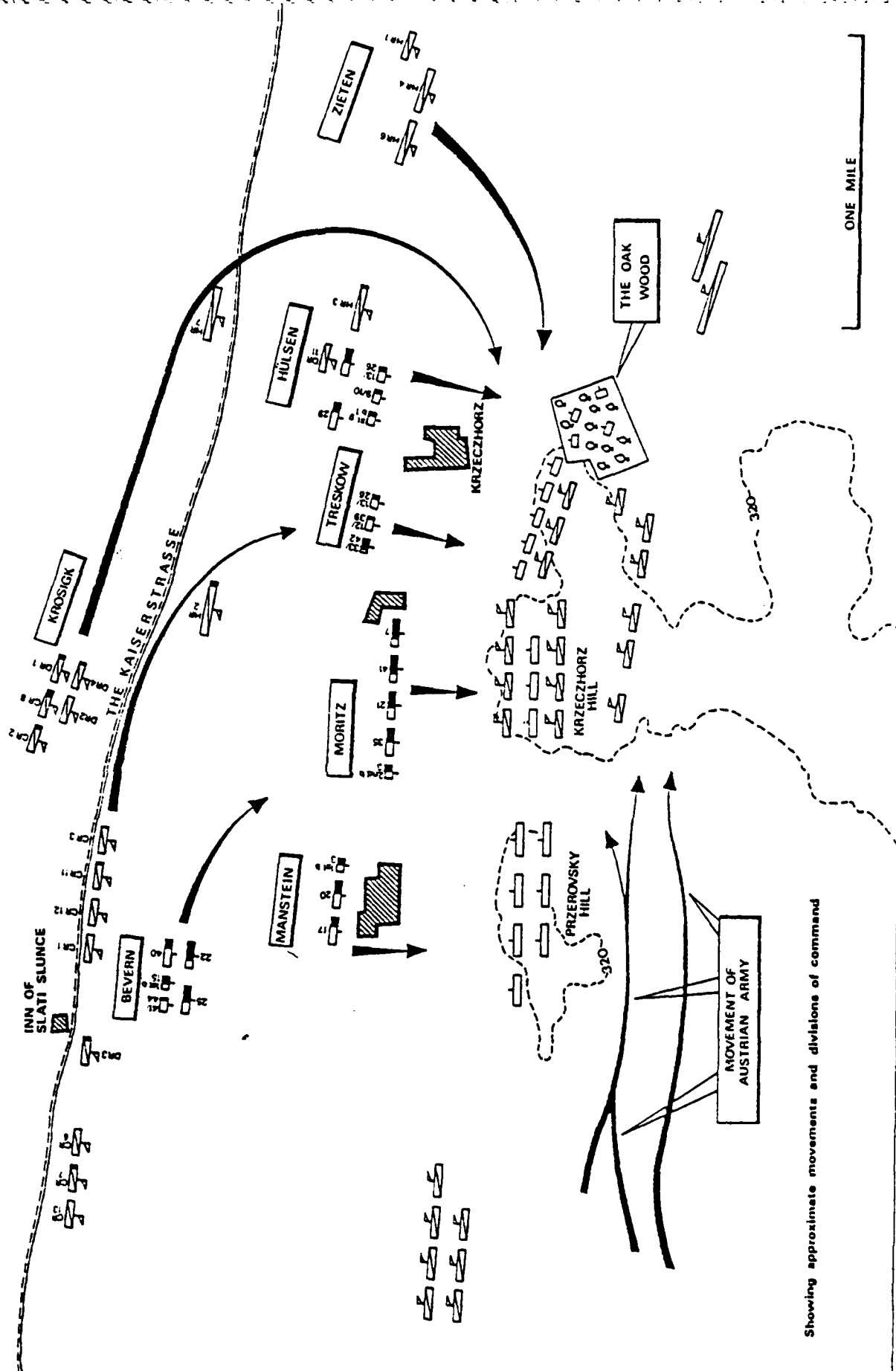


PRAGUE, 6 May 1757



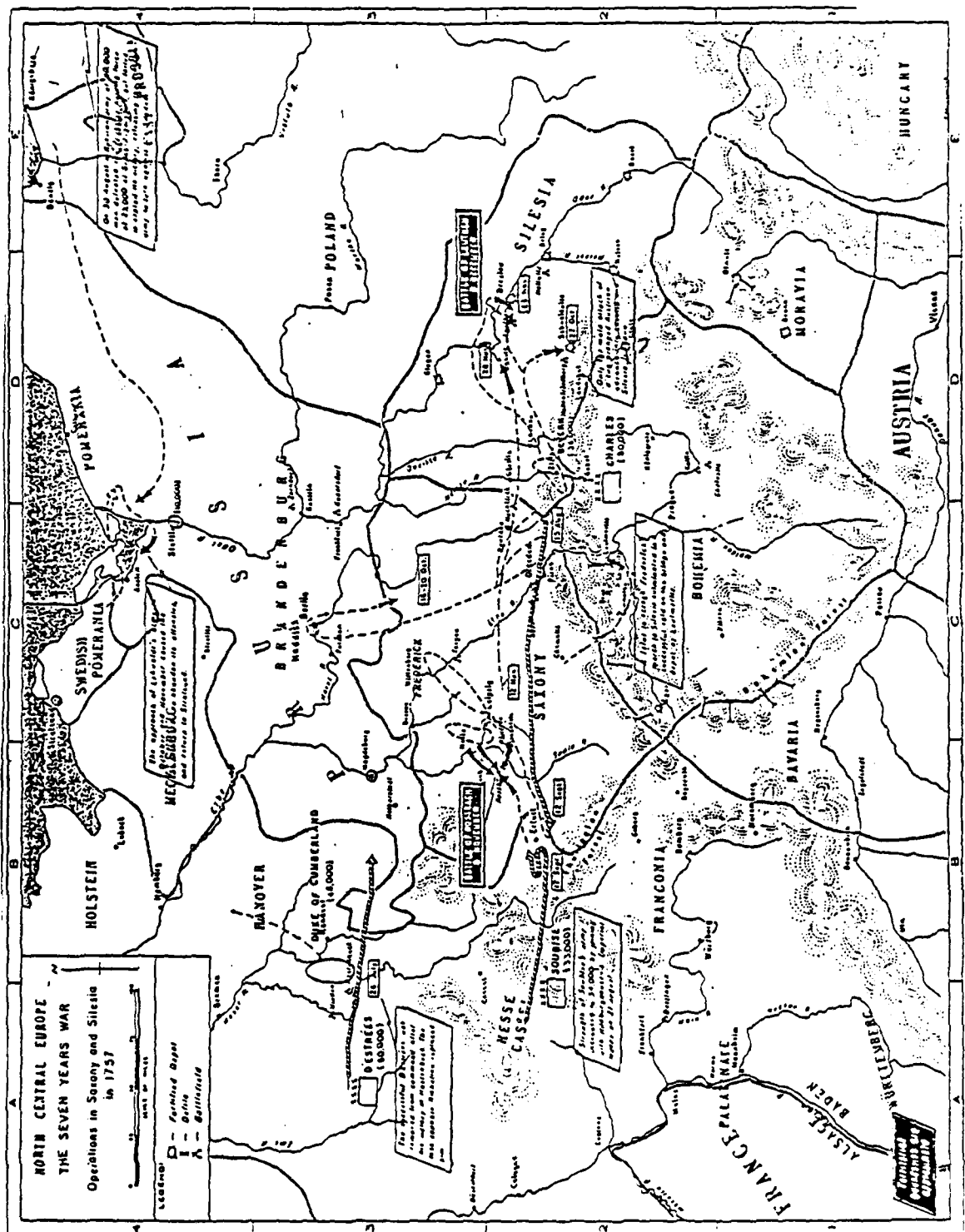
MAP 5

KOLIN, 18 June 1757



Showing approximate movements and divisions of command

MAP 6



MAP 8

ROSSBACH, 5 November 1757

PRUSSIAN CAMP

JANUS HILL

ROSSBACH

LUNSTÄDT

ALLIED ADVANCE GUARD

ALLIED MAIN ARMY

SAVOLITZ'S FIRST CHARGE

SAVOLITZ'S SECOND CHARGE

TAGEWABEN

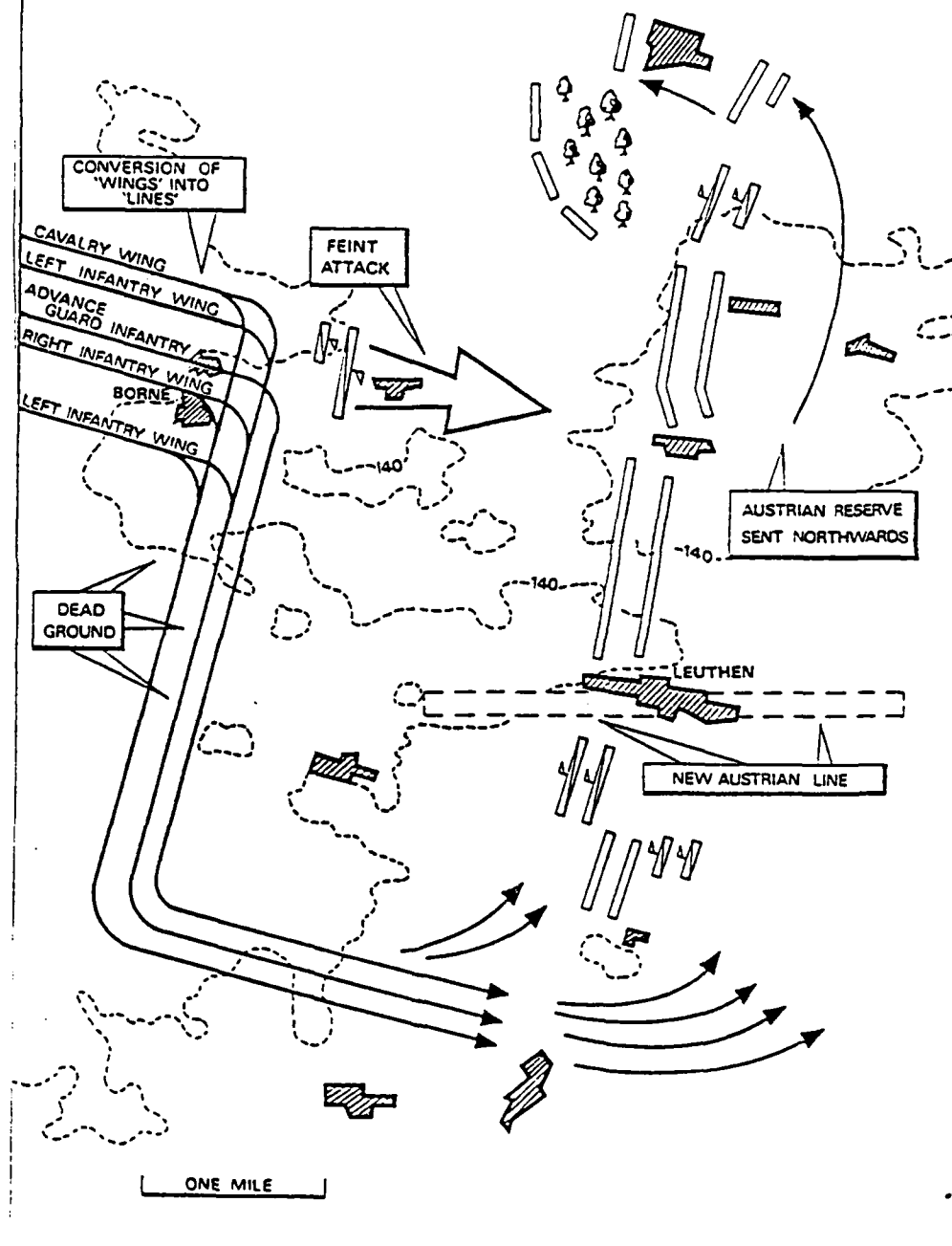
ONE MILE

N.B. Prussian regimental casualties in this battle are unknown

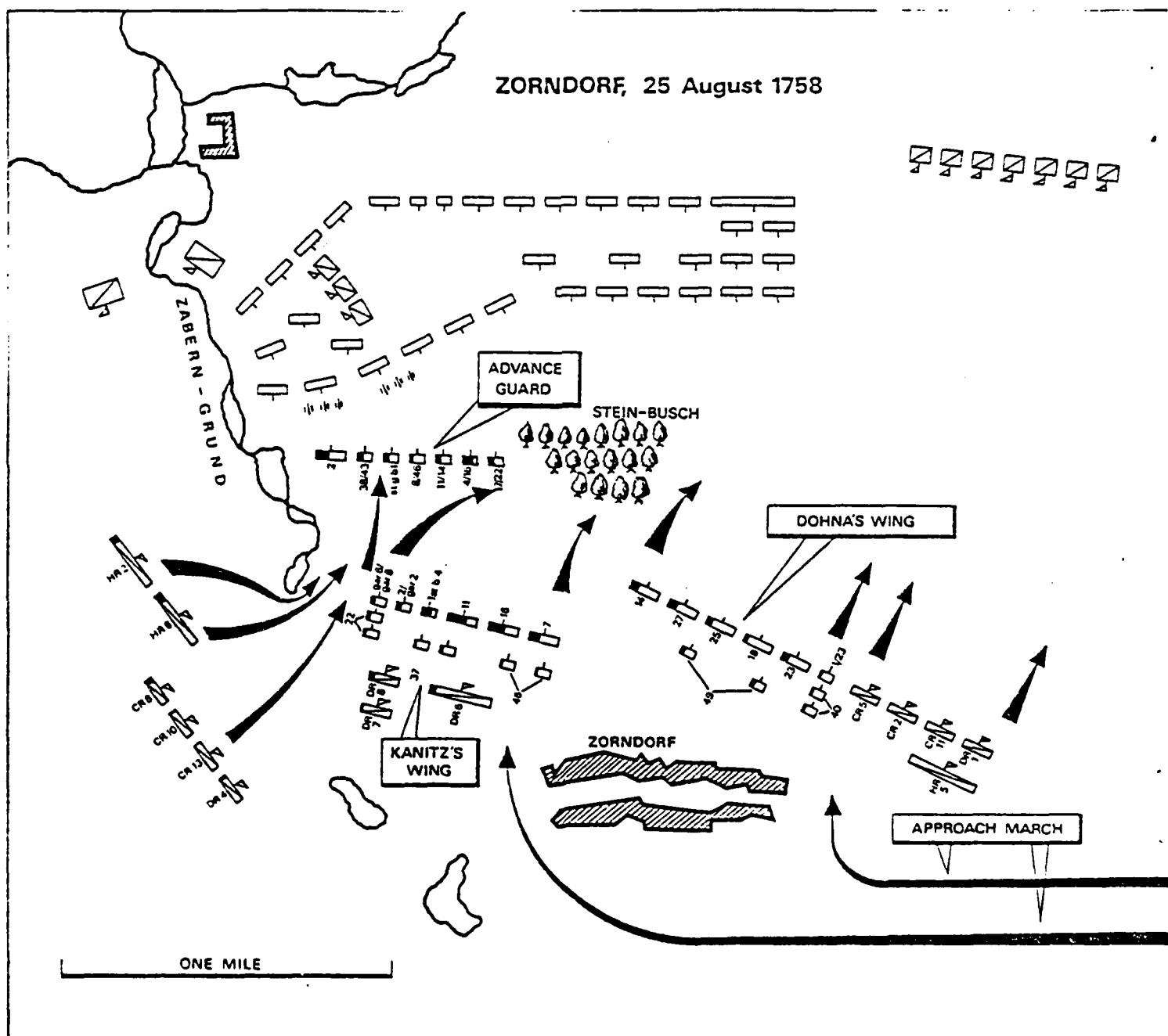
1008 Prussian regimental casualties in this battle are unknown

54

LEUTHEN, 5 December 1757 - The approach march

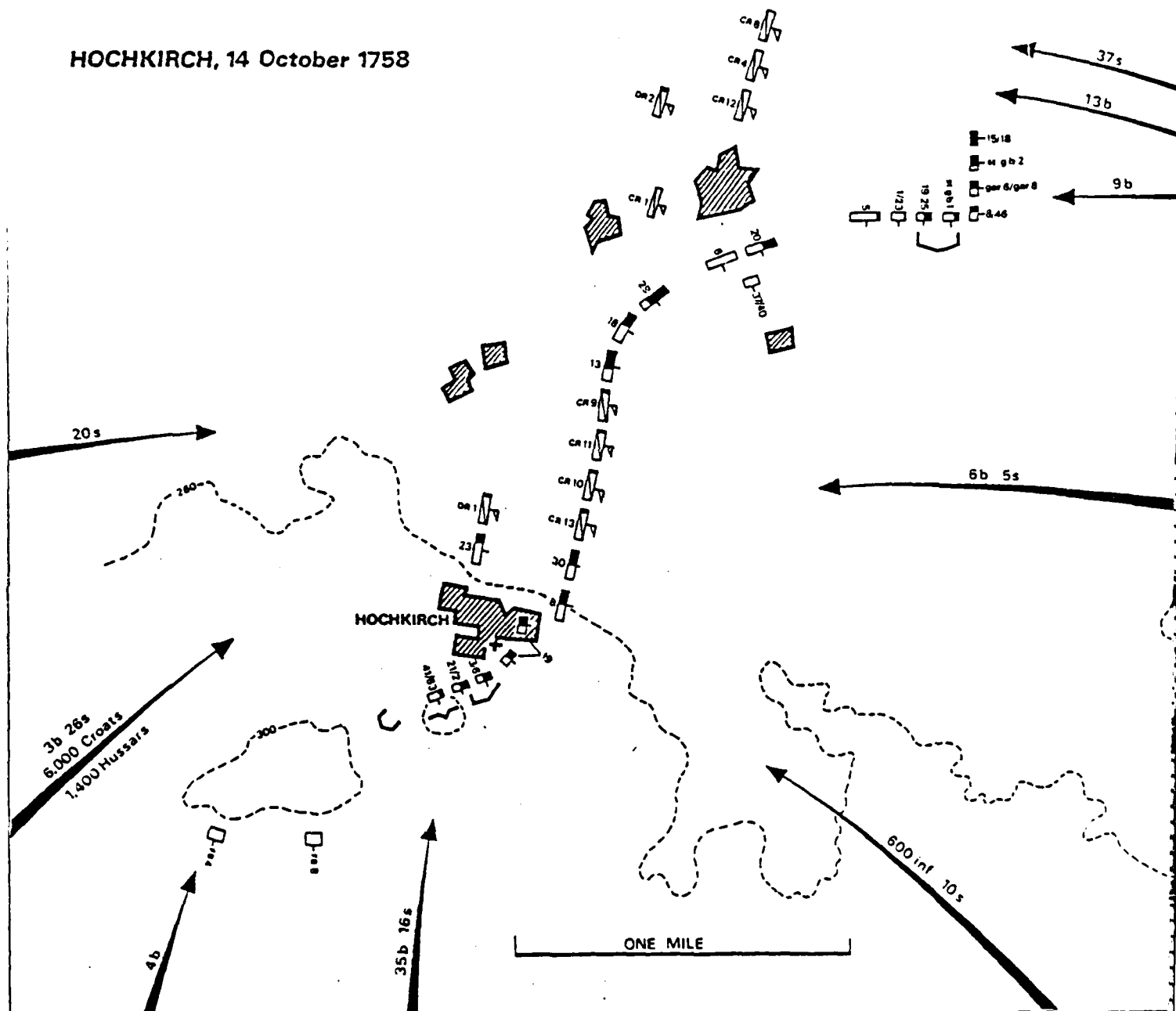


MAP 10



MAP 11

HOCHKIRCH, 14 October 1758



Map 12

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Silesia (22,000) under General Schwerin
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Pomerania (8,500) under Prince of Hessen-Darmstadt
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CHAPTER 3

JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON

"No officer or soldier who ever served under me will question the generalship of Joseph E. Johnston." - William T. Sherman(1)

In the aftermath of the first Battle of Bull Run the newly organized government of the Confederate States of America was forced to decide on a national military strategy. The generals responsible for the victory, P.T. Beauregard and Joseph E. Johnston argued for the concentration of all available southern forces for a decisive strike into the North.(2) President Davis feeling that he had to protect all the territory of the confederacy would not authorize the needed concentration of forces.(3) Thus the Confederacy reaffirmed its strategic defensive policy.

Having assumed a defensive posture the government set out to reorganize the command structure of the Confederate Army. Part of this reorganization was the establishment of military commands based on geography. These commands were termed departments. The Department of Northern Virginia was established on 22 October 1861 and General Joseph E. Johnston was appointed as its commander.(4)

The department commanded by Johnston stretched from the

Alleghany Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay, and to facilitate control was further subdivided into three districts. These districts were

"The 'Valley District' lying between the Alleghany and Blue Ridge, commanded by Major-General Jackson; 'The District of the Potomac', commanded by General Beauregard, and extending from the Blue Ridge to the Quantico; and that of the Acquia, lying between the Quantico and the Chesapeake, commanded by Major-General Holmes." (5)

The majority of the forces available to the Department of Northern Virginia were concentrated in the Army of the Potomac which was entrenched in the vicinity of Centreville, Virginia. Additionally, Johnston had important outposts on the Potomac River at Leesburg, Dumfries and Evansport. (6)

As 1861 gave way to 1862 Johnston watched with increasing concern the growth of the Union forces in the vicinity of Washington. As this force increased he became convinced that his forces were poorly positioned to stop an invasion by this army.

"We had to regard four routes to Richmond as practicable for the Federal Army: That chosen in the previous July; another east of the Potomac to the mouth of the Potomac Creek, and thence by Fredericksburg; the third and fourth by water, the one to the Lower Rappahannock, the other to Fort Monroe; and from these points respectively by direct roads. As the Confederate troops in Virginia were disposed, it seemed to me that invasion would be most difficult to meet... I did not doubt, therefore, that this route would be taken by General McClellan." (7)

This conviction lead to the conclusion on Johnston's

part that his forces stationed in northern Virginia should be withdrawn to positions less susceptible to being turned. This conclusion he communicated to the President and his cabinet on 20 February 1862

"I replied that, although the withdrawal of the army from Centreville would be necessary before McClellan's invasion, which might be expected as soon as the country should be in condition for the marching of armies, it was impossible then... I thought the measure should be postponed until the end of winter... It [the meeting] terminated without the giving of orders, but with the understanding on my part that the army was to fall back as soon as practicable."(8)

Based on this understanding Johnston began to actively prepare for the withdrawal from the Centreville position. The preparations included the selection of positions for his army on the south side of the Rappahannock River. On the 5th of March increased Federal activity in the vicinity of Dunfrees convinced Johnston that McClellan was about to take the field for active operations, and he gave the order to begin the withdrawal.

"I determined to move to the position already prepared for such an emergency -the south bank of the Rappahannock - strengthened by fieldworks and provided with a depot of food; for in it we should be better able to resist the Federal army advancing by Manassas, and near enough to Fredericksburg to meet the enemy there, should he take that route, as well as unite with any Confederate forces that might be sent to oppose him should he move by the Lower Rappahannock or Fort Monroe."(9)

Johnston's order was given on the 7th and by the 9th

all his troops were enroute to their points of concentration along the Rappahannock.(10) (map 13) The crossing of the river was accomplished by the evening of 11 March and the army began to establish itself in this new position. The occupation of this new line was to be shortlived, for a week later the order was given to again withdraw to the south, this time to the south bank of the Rapidan River. Johnston later gave his rationale for this further rearward movement.

"On the 18th [of March] it had become evident that the activity reported in Maryland, two weeks before, was connected with no advance of the enemy on the Fredericksburg route. This made the selection of one of the eastern routes by the Federal general seem to me more probable than I had before thought it. The army was, therefore, ordered to the south side of the Rapidan, where it was in a better position to unite with the Confederate forces between Richmond and the invading army."(11)

Johnston had correctly read the intentions of his opponent, for McClellan did intend to take one of the "eastern" routes for his invasion of Virginia. Not desiring to fight his way to Richmond via an overland route McClellan had convinced President Lincoln of the advisability of turning Johnston's positions at Centreville by using one of the water routes. Specifically he proposed moving his army by sea transport up the Rappahannock to Urbana. From this point a rapid march would place him at Richmond before Johnston at Centreville could fall back to defend the city. McClellan outlined his concept to the Secretary of War in February 1862.

"A rapid movement on Urbana would probably cut off Magruder in the Peninsula, and enable us to occupy Richmond before it could be strongly re-enforced. Should we fail in that, we could, with the cooperation of the Navy, cross the James and throw ourselves in the rear of Richmond... should circumstances render it not advisable to land at Urbana, we can use Mob Jack Bay [just north of the York River]; or, worst coming to the worst, we can take Fort Monroe as a base and operate with complete security, although less celerity and brilliance of results, up the Peninsula."(12)

Johnston's unanticipated withdrawal from the Centreville position did make it "not advisable" to land at Urbana for as McClellan remarked

"The Urbana movement lost much of its promise, as the enemy was now in position to reach Richmond before we could do so."(13)

The worst having come to past, McClellan opted for landing at Fort Monroe and advancing on Richmond from that direction. On the 19th of March he wrote to the Secretary of War explaining the objectives of this action.

"The proposed plan of campaign is to assume Fort Monroe as the first base of operations, taking the line of Yorktown and West Point upon Richmond as the line of operations, Richmond being the objective point. It is assumed that the fall of Richmond involves that of Norfolk and the whole of Virginia; also, that we shall fight a decisive battle between West Point and Richmond, to give which battle the rebels will concentrate all their available forces, understanding as they will, that it involves the fate of their cause."(14)

In accordance with the plan McClellan's Army of the

Potomac began loading onto transports in mid March(15) for ferrying to Fort Monroe. But even as the troops were loading, the location of their ultimate destination was still unknown to the Confederate strategists. Johnston, in his Narrative , describes these hectic days.

"The President [Davis] was uncertain whether this army was destined for Fort Monroe, to invade Virginia by the Peninsula, or for the invasion of North Carolina... The result was an order to me to send two brigades to Richmond to be held in reserve there... neither was permitted to pause in Richmond, however, the first being sent on to join the Confederate forces in North Carolina, and the second to Magruder's army near Yorktown."(16)

The army near Yorktown that was thus reinforced was under the command of John B. Magruder, the military head of the Department of the Peninsula. This small force had spent the waning months of 1861 and the opening ones of 1862 establishing defensive positions on the Peninsula. The main line of defense was along a strongly entrenched trace from the mouth of Warwick Creek to Yorktown; a secondary line, also in the process of being entrenched, was established in the vicinity of Williamsburg. Control of the two rivers, the York and the James, was also ensured. The York was controlled by land based artillery batteries emplaced at Yorktown and Gloucester, while access to the James was controlled by the iron-clad Virginia .

This control of the rivers was key to any proposed defense of the Peninsula. The topography of the area assists the defender, but if the opposing force could gain

use of the waterways the defensive position could be very easily turned. The Peninsula would then become a mere trap for the confederate forces deployed there.(17)

As the Federal army at Fort Monroe continued to grow, and then to push out from this position, it became apparent that this was to be the main theater of operations. The Confederate army under Magruder continued to be reinforced and by the 10th of April the majority of Johnston's army was either with Magruder or enroute to him.(18) (map 14)

On April 12th Johnston's department was enlarged to include the Department of the Peninsula and that of Norfolk.(19) During this period he visited the Confederate positions on the Peninsula and became convinced that they were untenable. Commenting on this inspection, he wrote

"By nightfall I was convinced that we could do no more on the Peninsula than delay General McClellan's progress toward Richmond, and that, if he found our entrenchments too strong to be carried certainly and soon, he could pass around them by crossing the York River."(20)

Having reached this conclusion Johnston returned to Richmond to discuss the situation with President Davis. This meeting occurred on 14 April 1862, and at it Johnston proposed a different plan for defeating McClellan.

"I represented to him that General McClellan's design was, almost certainly to demolish our batteries with his greatly superior artillery, and turn us by river, either landing in our rear or moving directly to Richmond; so that our attempting to hold Yorktown could only delay the enemy two or three weeks. Instead of that I proposed that all of

our available forces should be united near Richmond, Magruder's troops to be among the last to arrive; the great army thus formed about Richmond not to be in a defensive position... but to fall with its full force upon McClellan when the Federal army was expecting to besiege only the troops it had followed from Yorktown. If the Federal army should be defeated a hundred miles away from its place of refuge, Fort Monroe, it could not escape destruction. This was undoubtedly our best hope."(21)

This victory would, argued Johnston, not only decide the present campaign, but by destroying the main Union army would also decide the course of the war.(22) President Davis, after listening to Johnston, as well as the views of his Secretary of War and Generals Robert E. Lee and James Longstreet, rejected Johnston's plan. As Davis later wrote

"After hearing fully the views of the general officers named, I decided to resist the enemy on the Peninsula, and, with aid of the navy, to hold Norfolk and keep command of the James River as long as possible... Though General J.E. Johnston did not agree with this decision, he did not ask to be relieved."(23)

The main reason that Johnston did not ask to be relieved was his belief that events would prove him right.

"The belief that events on the Peninsula would soon compel the Confederate Government to adopt my method of opposing the Federal army, reconciled me somewhat to the necessity of obeying the President's order."(24)

Obeysing the orders of his commander-in-chief, albeit with no conviction that they were correct, Johnston assumed active command of the forces on the Peninsula on 17 April

1862. By the time Johnston arrived, McClellan's army had left Fort Monroe and had been stopped by Magruder's defenses along the Warwick river line. Quickly assessing the situation Johnston realized that "we had nothing to do but finish the works begun." (25)

Although Johnston could improve the positions occupied by his men, he could not improve his inferiority in artillery. His force was inferior not only in the number of artillery pieces but was also inferior in both caliber and range. Throughout the later half of April he watched as McClellan prepared artillery positions, which once finished would be able to demolish the Confederate lines with impunity. (26) As these positions neared completion he continued to warn the Richmond government of his untenable situation, finally informing them on April 29th of his intention to abandon the Yorktown-Warwick line.

"I suspect that McClellan is waiting for iron clad war vessels for the James River. They would enable him to reach Richmond three days before these troops setting out at the same time. Should such a move be made, the fall of Richmond would be inevitable, unless we anticipate it... The fight for Yorktown, as I said in Richmond, must be one of artillery, in which we cannot win... We must abandon the Peninsula soon. As two or three days, more or less, can signify little, I think it best for the sake of the capital to do it now, to put the army in position to defend Richmond. I shall therefore move as soon as can be done conveniently." (27)

The convenient time for leaving the Yorktown positions came on May 3rd. As Johnston wrote in his official after

action report.

"Circumstances indicating that the enemy's batteries were nearly ready, I directed the troops to move toward Williamsburg on the night of the 3rd by the roads from Yorktown and Warwick Court House. They were assembled about Williamsburg by noon of the 4th."(28)

Johnston's retirement from these positions was not only convenient but was timed accurately. The records indicate that McClellan's batteries were ready to begin their bombardment of the confederate positions on the 4th, with a general assault on the line planned for the 6th.(29) Johnston's sudden rearward movement foiled these carefully laid plans, and it was not until late on the fourth that McClellan's main force began to pursue the Confederate forces.

There were, however, two serious consequences to Johnston's withdrawal. The first was that by abandoning Yorktown the York River was no longer closed to Union war and transport vehicles since at no other location on the river could shore batteries command that waterway.(30) The second consequence of the withdrawal was that the positions occupied by the Confederates in Norfolk became untenable. While the actual withdrawal from this city did not begin until 9 May, its loss became inevitable with the withdrawal of Johnston's forces. The loss of Norfolk, while serious in itself, also meant that the Virginia no longer had a port to utilize and it was subsequently scuttled.(31) This action meant that the James River, like the York, was now

open to the Federal navy.

To Johnston the opening of both rivers emphasized the need for him to bring his army closer to Richmond in order to protect it against a Federal attack along either of these avenues. Consequently, he made no serious plans to establish a new defensive line on the Peninsula. As previously mentioned, the Confederate forces were assembled around Williamsburg at mid day on May 4th. Following a short rest break, the troops began, late in the day, to move from Williamsburg toward Richmond.(32)

As the southern forces were preparing to leave Williamsburg the Federal cavalry, under Stoneman, was reported to be closing on them. Johnston immediately ordered a small force, under General McLaws, to occupy one of the prepared redoubts, known as Fort Magruder, in order to cover the continuing withdrawal of the Confederate army.(33) That evening Johnston ordered Longstreet, with his division, to relieve McLaws' force.(34)

On 5 May 1862 the majority of Johnston's army continued its march up the Peninsula, while at Williamsburg an engagement was fought between Longstreet and the advance elements of the Union army. (map 15) Johnston was later to describe the action in the following manner.

"In the Federal reports of this action it is treated as battle in which the whole Confederate army was engaged. It was an affair of our rear-guard, the object of which was to secure our baggage trains. For that it was necessary to detain the Federal army a day, which was accomplished by the rear-guard."(35)

His mission accomplished Longstreet moved the next day to rejoin the main body of the Confederate army.

On that same day, 6 May, McClellan attempted what Johnston had long feared, the turning of the Confederate forces via the York River. Moving up the river the division of William B. Franklin landed at Eltham's Landing. This placed them squarely on the flank of G.W. Smith's division, then at Barhamsville, and in a position which could threaten the line of retreat of the Confederate forces. Johnston, upon learning of this, ordered the division under Magruder to Barhamsville and for G.W. Smith to take command of both divisions to neutralize this threat.(36)

Although Smith did not feel he had sufficient forces to eliminate the beachhead, he was able to contain the landing and allow the remainder of the force to continue its movement up the Peninsula. Thus McClellan's attempt to trap Johnston's army on the Peninsula was still-born.

The days which followed this "were so devoid of incident that it seems sufficient to say that the Confederates moved up the Peninsula in two columns."(37) When the march was finished the divisions of Magruder and G.W. Smith were at the Baltimore Cross-Road while those of Longstreet and D.H. Hill were at the Long Bridges.

The Confederate forces remained in these positions for several days. This static situation, however, changed on the 15th of May when Union gunboats ascended the James River. Although stopped by shore batteries at Drewry's

Bluff, this action convinced Johnston that he must realign his defenses. As he wrote in his interim report on the campaign dated 19 May 1862.

"On the 15th the attack upon the battery at Drewry's Bluff by the enemy's gunboats suggested to me the necessity of so placing the army as to be prepared for the enemy's advance up the river on the south side, as well as from the direction of West Point. We therefore crossed the Chickahominy to take a position 6 or 7 miles from Richmond. That ground being unfavorable, the present position was taken up on the 17th."(38)

The positions occupied on the 17th were chosen in order to be able to respond to a threat from either direction, and were only some three miles from the city. On the right was Longstreet's division covering the river road; D.H. Hill's in the center was across the Williamsburg Road; Magruder's division was on the left, crossing the Nine-Miles road; while that of Smith was in reserve behind Hill's and Magruder's.(39)

The situation facing Johnston at this point was indeed serious. General McClellan's army was on the opposite bank of the Chickahominy threatening the Confederate capital. To the north a large Union corps under General McDowell sat at Fredericksburg, dangerously close to both Richmond and Johnston's flank. Johnston's fear, and McClellan's plan, was that these two forces would combine in an attack on the Confederate forces in Virginia. (map 16)

On May 20th the Federal army began crossing the Chickahominy River and by the 25th two of the five corps of

the army had crossed the river. The two corps, those of Keyes and Heintzelman, crossed at Bottom's Bridge and pushed on to the vicinity of Seven Pines, where they halted and began preparing defensive positions.(40)

Having moved his army to the vicinity of Richmond, Johnston began the concentration of Confederate forces that he had envisioned, and argued for, since April. This gathering of forces was not to be as great as he had hoped since the units from the Carolinas, Georgia and other states, would not be able to arrive in time to participate in the impending battle. In essence his force was bolstered primarily by the addition of two divisions, those of A.P. Hill and Huger.

While McClellan was moving forces across the Chickahominy, he was also attempting to unite his army and the corps under McDowell. On the 27th of May Johnston was informed that McDowell's corps was moving south from its Fredricksburg location.(41) As Johnston later wrote.

"As the object of this march was evidently the juncture of this corps with the main army, I determined to attack McClellan before McDowell could join him."(42)

Johnston's plan for this general attack on McClellan's army called for a concentration of his forces on his left wing. The intention was that this wing would hit McClellan's right flank by a movement across the Chickahominy above Mechanicsville, while the right wing of the Confederate army would fall upon the flank of the two

corps of the Federal army that were across the river.(43) To prepare for this assault Johnston repositioned his divisions as follows. The division of A.P. Hill was sent to the Meadows Bridge on the left flank of the Chickahominy. The division of G.W. Smith was placed on line to the left of that of Magruder on the Mechanicsville Turnpike. Longstreet's division was moved to the left of that of D.H. Hill, while Huger's was placed in the rear of Longstreet's and D.H. Hill's.

The assault on McClellan's force was set for May 29th, but was cancelled on the evening of the 28th.(44) The attack was called off because late on that day Johnston received information that McDowell's corps had stopped its southward movement and had, in fact, begun to reverse its direction of march. This reversal in McDowell's movement was a result of an order by President Lincoln, who was reacting to "Stonewall" Jackson's success in the Shenandoah Valley.(45) While not wishing to detract from the tactical brilliance shown by Jackson in the Valley Campaign, it should be remembered that during this period he was under the operational control of Johnston. Johnston's instructions to Jackson had been to hold the attention of the Federal forces in the Valley. The primary intent of these instructions was to prevent the reinforcement of either McDowell or McClellan, a mission that Jackson was able to accomplish.(46)

Johnston, having called off the general offensive against all of McClellan's army, resolved to attack that

portion which was across the Chickahominy.

"As my object was to bring on the inevitable battle before McClellan should receive an addition of 40,000 new troops to his force, this intelligence made me return to my first design - that of attacking McClellan's left wing on the Williamsburg road as soon as, by advancing, it had sufficiently increased its distance from his right, north of the Chickahominy."(47)

By the 30th the enemy advance had achieved the distance Johnston felt was needed for success. The corps of Keyes and Heintzelman, each consisting of two divisions, were arrayed in such a fashion that they could not readily provide mutual support to each other. Casey's division was 1 kilometer in front of Seven Pines; Couch's was at Seven Pines and along the Nine-Mile road; Kearny's was two kilometers from that location along the Williamsburg road; while Hooker's division was further to the south watching the passage points through the White Oak Swamp.(48)

The plan developed by Johnston to defeat the extended Federal left wing was both simple and workable. The divisions of D.H. Hill and Longstreet, were to advance by the Williamsburg road and attack the enemy from the front. Huger's division was to move up the Charles City road and hit the Federal left flank "unless he found in his front force enough to occupy his division."(49) General Longstreet was given command of the entire right wing. The division of G.W. Smith was to move to the junction of the New Bridge and Nine-Mile roads to either prevent Union reinforcements from crossing the Chickahominy or to strike

at Keyes right flank should the opportunity present itself.(50) The remaining forces, under Magruder and A.P. Hill, were to remain in their positions along the Chickahominy.(51) (map 17)

Having decided on a course of action, the concept was passed on to the appropriate commanders late on 30 May 1862. As Johnston reported,

"Written orders were dispatched to Major-Generals Hill, Huger and G.W. Smith. General Longstreet being near my headquarters, received verbal instructions."(52)

At this point Johnston's simple plan began to become unraveled. Longstreet, as the commander of the attacking force, informed D.H. Hill that he was to lead the attack, but Hill was directed not to move until Huger's troops were in position.(53) Longstreet, however, apparently never communicated this intent to Huger. The only orders Huger received were from Johnston, and they failed to specify that Longstreet was in command of the right wing or even that a general advance was impending.(54) Johnston's orders to G.W. Smith were likewise vague, informing him to move to the specified road junction but not detailing the overall plan or his role in it. Thus a significant portion of the blame for the confusion within the Confederate army must be attributed to Johnston. His lack of clear coordinating instructions, or, indeed, clear orders could only result in the transmission of orders that were confusing.

From the confusing instructions came a confusing set of

events on 31 May 1862. While the tactical events of the day are beyond the scope of this paper, a brief sketch of the major movements is essential. D.H. Hill, faithful to instructions from Longstreet, remained in place waiting for Huger's troops to move into position. Huger, however, had trouble moving his division across several streams that blocked his way, a task made no easier by the fact that the roads reserved for his unit had become clogged by troops from Longstreet's division. These brigades, for some inexplicable reason, had been sent south by Longstreet.(55) General Hill continued to wait until 1300 hours, when, Huger's force still not appearing, "the signal guns were fired and my [Hill's] division moved off in fine style."(56)

Meanwhile, on the left flank, G.W. Smith and Johnston patiently waited for the battle to begin. Johnston in his Narrative justified his action in being with the left rather than the right wing of his army.

"Being confident that Longstreet and Hill, with their forces united, would be successful in the earlier part of the action... I left the immediate control, on the Williamsburg road, to them, under general instructions, and placed myself on the left, where I could soonest learn the approach of Federal reinforcements from beyond the Chickahominy.(57)

There is no evidence that Johnston became overly concerned with the long delay on the right wing. Even after Hill had begun his attack he was unaware of it for several hours.(58) Finally, at about 1600 hours, Johnston gave the signal for Smith's division to advance on the Federal

positions under attack by Hill and Longstreet. Johnston accompanied a portion of Smith's force as it advanced and in the process was seriously wounded. This ended his tenure as the commander of the Department of Northern Virginia.

Johnston did not recover sufficiently from this wound to return to active duty until the following November, at which time he was assigned as the commander of the large geographical area between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Mississippi River.(59) This area included several already established "departments" and Johnston's role was to act as a mediator and coordinator of the actions of the independent commanders of these departments. General Johnston was to serve in this and other equally challenging command positions for over a year. At the end of this period, on 18 December 1863, Johnston received the following telegram from President Davis.

"General J.E. Johnston: You will turn over the immediate command of the Army of Mississippi to Lieutenant-General Polk, and proceed to Dalton and assume command of the Army of Tennessee... A letter of instruction will be sent to you at Dalton."(60)

Quickly entraining for North Georgia, Johnston assumed command of the Army of Tennessee on 27 December 1863. Once there he received not only the letter of instruction from Davis but also one from Secretary of War Seddon. Both of these letters urged Johnston to take the offensive, as Davis phrased it, "to regain possession of the territory from which we have been driven."(61)

The urgency of Davis' call for offensive action was determined by the deteriorating strategic situation that was faced by the Confederacy. In Virginia, although the Mine Run Campaign had failed, Meade's army was on the Rapidan river and a distinct threat to Lee. In the west, Tennessee, with the exception of the area east of Knoxville, was firmly in the hands of the Union. Grant was busily turning Chattanooga into a fortress from which to strike into the heart of the Confederacy, while the Federal forces in Nashville posed a credible threat to Mississippi. If the south did not take the initiative soon it would only be a matter of time before they were conquered.

Surveying his new command Johnston realized it was not in condition to assume active operations against the Federal forces opposing him. This assessment was based on two primary factors.⁽⁶²⁾ First the logistical and moral condition of the Army of Tennessee would not support offensive operations in the near future. Second was the numerical superiority of the Federal forces confronting the Confederate army then at Dalton. Johnston also had an operational reason for not advancing as he outlined in a letter to Davis on 2 January 1864.

"To assume the offensive at this point, we must either move into Middle or East Tennessee. To the first, the obstacles are Chattanooga, now a Fortress, the Tennessee River, the rugged desert of the Cumberland Mountains, and an army outnumbering ours more than two to one. The second course would leave the way into Georgia open."⁽⁶³⁾

The general continued in this same letter to suggest what was to become, ultimately, his operational concept for the Atlanta campaign.

"I can see no other mode of taking the offensive here, than to beat the enemy when he advances, and then move forward. But, to make victory probable, the army must be strengthened."(64)

This debate on the proper action to be taken by the Army of Tennessee continued on into the spring of 1864. The exchange of views reached its height in March when General Braxton Bragg, as Davis' chief military advisor, outlined an offensive campaign that the Richmond government desired Johnston to pursue. In describing this plan Bragg included the statement that "Troops can only be drawn from other points for advance."(65) Johnston, while accepting philosophically the idea of taking the offensive, called for the concentration of all available forces at Dalton, to defend or attack as needed.(66) The net result of this debate was that Johnston did not launch an offensive operation, and because he would not, Richmond did not send him any additional troops.

While debating with his superiors over the proper course of action, Johnston spent the winter and spring months of 1864 in "improving the discipline and instruction of the troops, and attention to their comfort."(67) The degree to which he was able to restore the army to fighting condition is attested to by an article appearing in a Mobile, Alabama, newspaper.

"General Johnston is unquestionably a great captain in the science of war. In ninety days he has so transformed this army, that I can find no word to express the extent of the transformation but the word regeneration. It is a regenerated army. He found it, ninety days ago, disheartened, despairing and on the verge of dissolution. By judicious measures he has restored confidence, re-established discipline and exalted the hearts of his army."(68)

One of the reasons Johnston was able to perform this transformation of the army was relative lack of military activity during those months. Johnston recalls that, with one notable exception, "military operations were confined generally to skirmishing between little scouting parties of cavalry of our army with pickets of the other."(69) The exception occurred in early February, when General U.S. Grant sent a Federal force under W.T. Sherman into Mississippi.(70) While Sherman's move was not directed against the Army of Tennessee, it did have an impact on Johnston's command.

The immediate impact on Johnston was a request from Davis to do everything he could to help Polk, the Confederate commander in Mississippi, either by sending him re-enforcements or by joining him with what force he could. Johnston's response to this order was to inform the President that he could not both hold his position at Dalton and also dispatch help to Polk.

In his official report of the campaign Johnston succinctly outlined the course of events that followed this exchange.

"On February 17th the President ordered me by telegraph to detach Lieutenant-General Hardee with the infantry of his corps, except Stevenson's division, to aid Lieutenant-General Polk against Sherman in Mississippi. This order was obeyed as promptly as our means of transportation permitted. The force detached was probably exaggerated to Major-General Thomas [the commander of the Union Army of the Cumberland then at Chattanooga], for on the 23rd the Federal army advanced to Ringgold, on the 24th drove in our outposts, and on the 25th skirmished at Mill Creek Gap and Crows Valley, east of Rock Face Mountain. We were successful at both places... In the night of the 26th the enemy retired."(71) (map 18)

During the course of this brief battle Hardee's troops returned to Dalton, having been too late to assist in the actions against Sherman. After this skirmish the action around Dalton did settle into the routine already described. This was all to change, however, in the closing weeks of April 1864.

By that time it had become obvious to Johnston that the Federal forces in the West were massing to strike at his army at Dalton. W.T. Sherman, having assumed Grant's mantle as the Union commander in the West in March, had three armies under his control. These were the Army of the Ohio, under Schofield; the Army of the Cumberland, under Thomas; and the Army of the Tennessee under McPherson. The strategic plan, as developed by Grant, was "to work all parts of the army together, and somewhat toward a common center."(72) Sherman's part in this grand scheme would be to defeat the army of Joseph Johnston and then drive into

the heart of the Confederacy. As Grant instructed him on 4 April 1864

"You I propose to move against Johnston's army, to break it up, and to go into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their resources."(73)

Sherman, in his autobiography, states that he interpreted this to mean that "Neither Atlanta, nor Augusta, nor Savannah, was the objective, but the 'army of Jos. Johnston' go where it might."(74)

Sherman designed his opening move of the Atlanta campaign to destroy Johnston's army in its Dalton position. Sherman, realizing that a frontal attack on the Dalton position would be prohibitively costly, if not impossible, ordered Thomas, supported by Schofield, to press Johnston from the front while McPherson flanked the position. McPherson's army was to pass through Snake Creek Gap and emerge astride the Confederate line of communication in the vicinity of Resaca.(75) (maps 18 and 19)

While Sherman was moving his armies into positions from which to start his offensive, Johnston was trying to convince the Richmond government of his very real need for additional troops to counter Sherman's certain advance. On the 4th of May, as skirmishing was going on in front of the Dalton positions, Johnston finally received confirmation from Bragg that Polk had been ordered to send reinforcements to the Army of Tennessee.(76)

On 5 May 1864 Sherman started his assault on Johnston's

army. Thomas attacked the forward Confederate positions along Rocky Face, while McPherson moved cross country toward Snake Creek Gap. The fighting along Rocky Face continued for several days, and on the 8th McPherson made his appearance in the Gap.(77)

This unexpected move forced Johnston to revise his plans for the defense and defeat of Sherman's force. His original plan had been based on the hope that Sherman would want to fight the decisive battle of the campaign while he, Sherman, was still close to his base of supply. Johnston hoped that Sherman would

"dash his army upon those formidable barriers [at Dalton] and give the chance for a destructive counter-blow when weakened and perhaps desorganized by an unsuccessful assault."(78)

Johnston's line of communication was saved, and Sherman's plan for a quick victory foiled, by the timely arrival of Cantey's brigade at Resaca. This unit, the first of Polk's army to arrive, had reached Resaca before McPherson entered the Gap and had been ordered by Johnston to defend that place. On 9 May when McPherson advanced on Resaca he found this brigade entrenched and, thinking that the position was held by a considerable force, retired back into the Gap.(79)

Sherman, upon learning that McPherson had failed in his turning movement, was still unwilling to assault the Confederate positions at Dalton frontally. He therefore directed Thomas to keep the forces at that location occupied

while the remainder of the Union army followed the route taken by McPherson into Snake Creek Gap.

To counter McPherson's sudden appearance Johnston had immediately dispatched one of his corps commanders, Lieutenant-General Hardee, with three divisions to Resaca.⁽⁸⁰⁾ When McPherson withdrew into the Gap, Johnston recalled one of these divisions to Dalton, while the other two were ordered to remain at Tilton. By the 11th of May the forces defending Resaca had been reinforced by the arrival of Loring's division and General Polk himself. To this individual Johnston entrusted the defense of Resaca.

By the 11th Johnston's cavalry had provided him with enough intelligence to determine that Sherman's main force was following in the wake of McPherson. Johnston, however, elected to retain the Dalton positions for another day. After the war he was to give his reasons for doing so.

"The Confederate army remained in its position near Dalton until May 13th [approximately 0100 hours], because I knew the time that would be required for the march of 100,000 men through the long defile between their right flank near Mill Creek Gap and the outlet of Snake Creek Gap; and the shortness of the time in which 43,000 men could march by two good roads from Dalton to Resaca; and the further fact that our post at Resaca could hold out longer than our march to that point would require."⁽⁸¹⁾

Johnston's faith in his time-distance calculations was justified. By the time Sherman was prepared to advance from Snake Creek Gap the Army of Tennessee had occupied strong defensive positions at Resaca. The move had also united

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AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLES EMPLOYED BY
FREDERICK THE GREAT A (U) ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL
STAFF COLL FORT LEAVENWORTH KS J A GRAHAM 1985

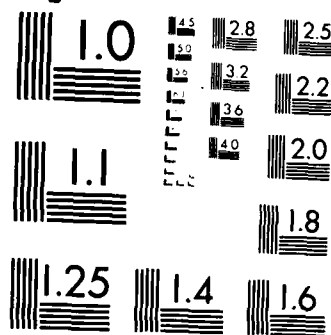
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this army with the force from Mississippi under Polk, raising to effective strength of Johnston's command to about 60,000, still far short of Sherman's force of over 100,000 men. Now entrenched at Resaca, Johnston organized into three corps under Hardee, Polk and J.B. Hood.

These three corps were placed into defensive positions with Polk on the left, Hardee in the center and Hood on the right. Skirmishing between the contending armies began on 13 May, and continued into the 14th. On that day Sherman began moving forces to his right, in an effort to flank Polk's position, seize crossing sites over the Oostanaula River, thereby turning Johnston's position at Resaca. Here Sherman's numerical superiority began to play a decisive role. Johnston could not detach enough troops to meet the threat on his left, and still hold his main defensive positions.(82) This was a pattern that was to be repeated throughout the remainder of the campaign, Sherman pushing units to one flank or another until Johnston ran out of troops to match them. Then Sherman would continue the flanking movement until such time that the entire Confederate position was in danger of being turned, at which point Johnston would withdraw to a position closer to Atlanta.

This pattern was established at Resaca on the 15th of May, when Johnston learned that Federal troops had crossed the Oostanaula and were threatening to cut off his line of withdrawal. (map 19) In Johnston's words

"The danger that threatened our line of

communications made me regard the continued occupation of Resaca as too hazardous. The army was therefore ordered to cross the river that night."(83)

Johnston's plan, as he began this withdrawal was to fight only from a position that would assure him some measure of success, or when a blunder on the part of his opponent would give him the opportunity for a victory. The following account from Johnston's official report of the campaign reflects this feeling.

"The great numerical superiority of the Federal army made it expedient to risk battle only when position or some blunder on the part of the enemy might give us counterbalancing advantages. I, therefore, determined to fall back slowly until circumstances should put the chances of battle in our favor... and, hoping by taking advantage of positions and opportunities, to reduce the odds against us by partial engagements."(84)

The Army of Tennessee continued its slow withdrawal southward searching for a good defensive position.(85) Finding none the army reached Adairsville on the morning of the 17th. Reaching this point Johnston developed a bold plan to defeat Sherman's force piecemeal. In his Narrative Johnston leaves a description of the factors which caused him to think that he could afford to attack.

"Two roads lead south from Adairsville - one following the railroad through Kingston, and, like it, turning almost at right angles to the east at that place; the other, quite direct to the Etowah railroad bridge, passing through Cassville, where it is met by the first. The probability that the Federal army

would divide - a column following each road - gave me a hope of engaging and defeating one of them before it could receive aid from the other."(86) (map 20)

The plan of attack itself was simple. To ensure that the Union forces did divide into two columns, one Confederate corps, Hardee's, was to take the Kingston road while the other two proceeded on the direct route to Cassville. At Cassville Polk's corps was to turn and advance on the Federal column from the front, while Hood's corps proceeded to flank the column from the east. It was planned that Hood's unit would fall upon the left flank of the Union troops as soon as Polk attacked them from the front.(87) Hardee, having drawn part of the Federal force into Kingston, was to delay their march toward Cassville as long as possible.

Initially it appeared as if the plan would come to fruition. The Union army did divide into two columns as they left Adairsville. General Polk's corps assumed its position at Cassville, and Hood's moved off to begin its flanking movement. It was at this point that the plan came apart, as Johnston wrote to President Davis the next day.

"Yesterday [19 May], having ordered a general attack, while the officer charged with the lead was advancing he was deceived by a false report that a heavy column of enemy had turned our right and was close upon him, and took a defensive position. When the mistake was discovered it was too late to resume the movement."(88)

The unnamed officer in Johnston's report to Davis was

J.B. Hood. Since the success of the operation depended upon accurate timing, the battle had to be finished before the arrival of the other column. The loss of time caused by Hood's action necessitated cancelling the attack.(89)

Having been frustrated in his plans for offensive action, Johnston ordered his army to assume defensive positions to the rear of Cassville, with the intention of giving battle to Sherman at this point. The position he selected was excellently suited for the defense, a bald ridge with an open valley before it.(90) However, this plan too was to be frustrated by his subordinate commanders. During the evening of that day, 19 May 1864, Johnston held a council with his corps commanders. At this meeting two of them, Polk and Hood, expressed the opinion that they felt that Federal artillery would render their positions untenable and pressed for a withdrawal across the Etowah River. Johnston, believing that their lack of confidence would be transmitted to their soldiers, reluctantly agreed to the withdrawal.(91) The army crossed the Etowah on the 20th, and fell back to a position around Altoona Pass.

Sherman, however, had no intention of trying to force his way through the strong defenses at Altoona Pass. From his personal knowledge of the area, gained while on a tour of duty as a lieutenant, Sherman "knew that the Altoona Pass was very strong, would be hard to force, and resolved not even to attempt it, but to turn the position, by moving from Kingston to Marietta via Dallas."(92) By the 25th of May the Union army was steadily moving toward Dallas.

Almost as soon as Sherman's columns crossed the Etowah and began moving toward Dallas Johnston was informed of it by his cavalry. Quickly divining Sherman's intention, Johnston began to move his army to put it once again in front of the Federal force. On the 25th the armies came together in the rough country between Dallas and New Hope Church.(93)

For the next ten days, until the 4th of June, the two armies engaged in bitter, but inconclusive, fighting. During this period, Sherman, finding the direct route from Dallas to Marietta blocked, gradually extended his lines eastward toward the Atlanta-Chattanooga railroad. His forces finally reached Acworth on the 3rd, and Johnston became convinced that he could no longer hold his position at New Hope Church. During the night of 4 June the Army of Tennessee withdrew to prepared positions along the line of Lost, Pine and Brush Mountains.(94) (map 21)

This position, slightly in front of Kennesaw Mountain, covered the approaches to Marietta and Atlanta. Johnston, although having given up considerable territory to the enemy, still had his army intact, a fact which Sherman recognized. In a letter to his brother, written on 9 June, Sherman stated that Johnston "can fight or fall back, as he pleases. The future is uncertain, but I will do all that is possible."(95)

All that was possible was to move his army forward to confront the new defensive lines of the Confederate force. This he did, albeit slowly, and spent the next two weeks

attempting to turn Johnston out of his positions. With minor shifts in the line of defense Johnston was able to retain his position while a stronger position was prepared at Kennesaw Mountain. On the night of the 18th, the new positions being ready, the Confederate army fell back to them.

Once again Johnston's sense of timing had proved accurate, for in his sudden withdrawal he frustrated a plan by Sherman to take the Lost-Brush Mountain position by storm. As early as 16 June Sherman had written to Major-General Halleck that he was "inclined to feign on both flanks and assault the center. It may cost us dear but in results would surpass an attempt to pass around." (96)

Johnston held his position at Kennesaw Mountain until 2 July. In the intervening period Sherman did attempt a frontal assault on the 27th of June. (97) (map 22) Despite bitter, hard fighting the Confederate lines were able to hold. This battle convinced Sherman that he could gain nothing by a direct assault and he returned to his proven method of maneuvering Johnston out of his position. While Sherman was occupied with his maneuver around the Confederate flank, Johnston was occupied in preparing two new defensive lines.

Both of these new lines were north of the Chattahoochee River, the first being nine or ten miles south of Marietta near Smyrna. The second was located on the high ground near the Chattahoochee. (98) On the 2nd of July Sherman's forces had moved to Johnston's right to such an extent that it was

in fact closer to Atlanta than the Confederate left wing. Consequently, Johnston gave the order to withdraw, and the first of these new positions was occupied on the morning of the 3rd. Sherman, quickly marshalled his strength against this new position, forcing Johnston to fall back to the final position north of the Chattahoochee on the 5th.(99)

Looking at these two months, May and June 1864, it would appear that Johnston was merely reacting to Sherman's maneuvers. Looking only at the Army of Tennessee this is a correct assessment of the situation. However, Johnston had a broader plan for dealing with Sherman that required forces that were outside of his immediate control. This plan called for the cavalry of the Department of Mississippi, under Nathan B. Forrest, to cross into Tennessee and cut Sherman's long and vulnerable lines of communications. With his logistical tail cut, Sherman would be either forced to withdraw from Georgia, or could be brought to battle with his army out of supplies.

Johnston began proposing this scheme of maneuver to the authorities in Richmond as well as S.D. Lee, the commander in Mississippi, while he was still in Dalton.(100) His requests for this attack on Sherman's rear was repeated numerous times throughout May and June. Although the proposed action received favorable consideration in both Richmond and Mississippi, it was never implemented, primarily because of S.D. Lee's fears that to strip his department of the troops needed for the raid would leave it open to invasion by Union forces stationed in

Tennessee.(101) By the end of June it had become apparent to Johnston that if he were to stop Sherman it would have to be with the Army of Tennessee.

If the Army of Tennessee was to defeat Sherman's force, it soon became obvious that it would not be able to do so from the north bank of the Chattahoochee. Sherman, upon finding the Confederate army drawn up in this position, fixed it there with Thomas' Army of the Cumberland while Schofield and McPherson searched for crossing sites up and down stream. Schofield was able to secure a crossing site at Roswell, about 20 miles up river from Johnston, and began crossing his army on 8 July.(102) Johnston, upon learning of this, ordered his force to withdraw across the Chattahoochee on the night of the 9th. (map23)

The positions to which Johnston's army moved had been under construction since mid-June. It was from here that he expected to make the final fight for Atlanta. In these positions Johnston had plans to attack the Federal army piecemeal as it crossed Peach Tree Creek. Failing in that endeavor he felt that the Confederate army could fall back into Atlanta "which it could hold forever, and so win the the campaign, of which that place was the object."(103)

Johnston was not allowed to fight this final decisive battle with Sherman, however. On the night of 17 July, 1864, the following telegram was received by General J.E. Johnston.

"Lieut. Gen. J.B. Hood has been commissioned to the temporary rank of general under the late law of Congress.

I am directed by the Secretary of War to inform you that as you have failed to arrest the advance of the enemy to the vicinity of Atlanta, far in the interior of Georgia, and express no confidence that you can defeat or repel him, you are hereby relieved from the Command of the Army and Department of Tennessee, which you will immediately turn over to General Hood.

(signed) S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector General"(104)

Thus ended Johnston's active role in the Atlanta Campaign.

JOHNSTON AS AN OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

In looking at the two campaigns most closely linked with the name of Joseph E. Johnston the tactical aspects of the campaigns have not been chronicled in detail. The emphasis, has been on Johnston as the commander of an operational force, and on the rationale he utilized for the decisions he made. In looking at these decisions the principles that Johnston employed in the execution of the operational art can be seen. What follows is an examination of these derived principles.

The first, and apparently paramount, principle that guided Joe Johnston was that of preservation of the force. To him it was the Confederate army that was the most important commodity, for if the army remained in being then the existence of the Confederacy was still a possibility. Conversely the destruction of the army would mean the subjugation of the southern states.

This principle as a driving factor can be seen in both the campaigns. As the commander of the Department of Northern Virginia one of the reasons that Johnston withdrew from the positions around Centreville was that they were exposed and easily bypassed by the Union army. Once bypassed, and their lines of communications cut, the numerical superiority of the Federal army would, in all probability, lead to the destruction of his army. He therefore elected to reposition his force on more defensible terrain, even though it meant giving up territory.

This principle can also be seen as operating in the active campaign on the Peninsula. One of the reasons, as outlined above, for abandoning the Yorktown-Warwick line was to keep the force from being decimated by the superior Union artillery. As Johnston wrote in his official report

"I determined, therefore, to hold the position as long as it could be done without exposing our troops to the fire of the powerful artillery."(105)

Once it became obvious that the Union batteries were about to begin their bombardment of the Confederate positions he ordered the withdrawal.

Once the withdrawal began the principle of keeping the force in being was also in operation. Johnston could not keep his force on the Peninsula without the very real danger that it would be trapped and destroyed there. Therefore he continued his withdrawal to a point where the danger of being turned was minimal.

In the Atlanta campaign this concept also drove many of

the decisions made by Johnston. At Dalton and Resaca the Union maneuvers "would have made the destruction of the confederate army inevitable,"(106) so the army was withdrawn from them. This pattern, as has been shown, was repeated until Johnston had reached Atlanta itself.

Before moving on to the other principles that governed Johnston a final aspect about his concept of keeping the army intact must be mentioned. This aspect of keeping his army in being meant running counter to the national strategy of the Confederacy. This strategy, as expressed by President Davis, was the defense of all southern soil.(107) By giving up territory in Virginia in his withdrawal from Centreville Johnston was to receive the censure of the President. Doing so in Georgia contributed significantly to his relief.

Johnston's troubles with the chief executive of the Confederacy were further compounded by his seeming lack of initiative. It appears as if Johnston was continually reacting rather than acting. This is seen in his withdrawal from northern Virginia and again in his movements up the Peninsula. In this, the Peninsula Campaign, the only time that he acted, rather than reacted to McClellan, was at Seven Pines.

The entire Atlanta Campaign can also be viewed in this light. All of the moves of the Army of Tennessee were as a result of the actions taken by Sherman. Looking at the events this appears to be true, but looking at the plans Johnston tried to implement this is not so obvious. The two

that are readily apparent are his plan to attack at Cassville and his suggestions for Forrest to cut Sherman's lines of communications.

The reasons that Johnston's offensive plans failed are twofold. The first was Johnston's style of commandership. He would outline to his subordinates his concept of the operation, often in vague terms as at Seven Pines, and then rely on them to execute the plan. As we have seen, he rarely checked on them to insure compliance with his directives. This failure led to the fiasco at Seven Pines, and Hood's actions at Cassville.

The second reason for the failure of Johnston's offensive plans was the antipathy that existed between Johnston and Jefferson Davis. This acrimonious relationship, which lasted throughout the war, had a detrimental effect on Johnston's requests for additional forces with which to prosecute his campaigns. Davis was all too willing to listen to the voices of those who opposed Johnston's schemes. Without the additional forces, such as Forrest's cavalry in the Atlanta campaign, Johnston felt he could not take the initiative.

A second principle that Johnston operated on was that of concentration. While this is synonymous with the United States Army principle of mass, to Johnston the idea of concentrating was for two very specific reasons. The first of these reasons was the idea of the decisive battle in the Napoleonic ideal. The second was more traditional in that he endeavored to concentrate on only a portion of his

numerically superior opponent.

The idea of concentrating to fight the decisive battle is most clearly demonstrated in his plans for the army of the Department of Northern Virginia. As already pointed out, he felt that if all the available Confederate forces were concentrated at Richmond to defeat McClellan at that point, the course of not only the campaign but the war could be determined.

While not as obvious, this concept also played a part in the planning for the Atlanta campaign. In preparing his elaborate defenses at Dalton Johnston assumed that Sherman would assault them and thus decide the outcome of the campaign in one climactic battle at its very outset.(108) When Sherman did not do the expected, Johnston was forced into reacting to his opponents moves. At the end of Johnston's participation in the campaign he was again planning to fight the decisive battle, this time in and around Atlanta. Whether or not his plan would have worked is a mute point, the important point is that he was still endeavoring to bring it about.

The second aspect of Johnston's desire to concentrate his forces, to overwhelm selected portions of his opponents army, is likewise illustrated in both campaigns. In the Peninsula campaign Johnston's plan for defeating the two corps separated from McClellan's main body is the clear example of this principle in action. In the Atlanta campaign the best example is his plan to attack a portion of Sherman's army at Cassville.

A third principle which drove many of Johnston's actions was his concern over lines of communication. His desire to protect them led him to withdraw from Centreville, and in part the threat to them was a rationale for continuing his withdrawal up the Peninsula. During the Atlanta campaign every time Sherman threatened his lines of communication Johnston moved from the position he was in at the time. This preoccupation with maintaining his lines of communication makes sense when looked at in conjunction with his overriding principle of maintaining an army in being.

This preoccupation with lines of communications did have a positive aspect which is the fourth principle that Johnston consistently applied. This was to entice the enemy to lengthen his lines of communication, while shortening your own. This action placed the opposing force in a vulnerable position if his supply lines could be severed. The results of this maneuver are dramatically shown in the Atlanta campaign. As Sherman advanced he was forced to detach forces to protect his lines of communications, thereby reducing the size of the force confronting Johnston's army. For Johnston the reverse was true, as his lines were shortened his strength in relation to Sherman's grew. If a coordinated southern effort had been made on Sherman's lines of communications, as called for by Johnston, the utility of his long withdrawal may have been proved.

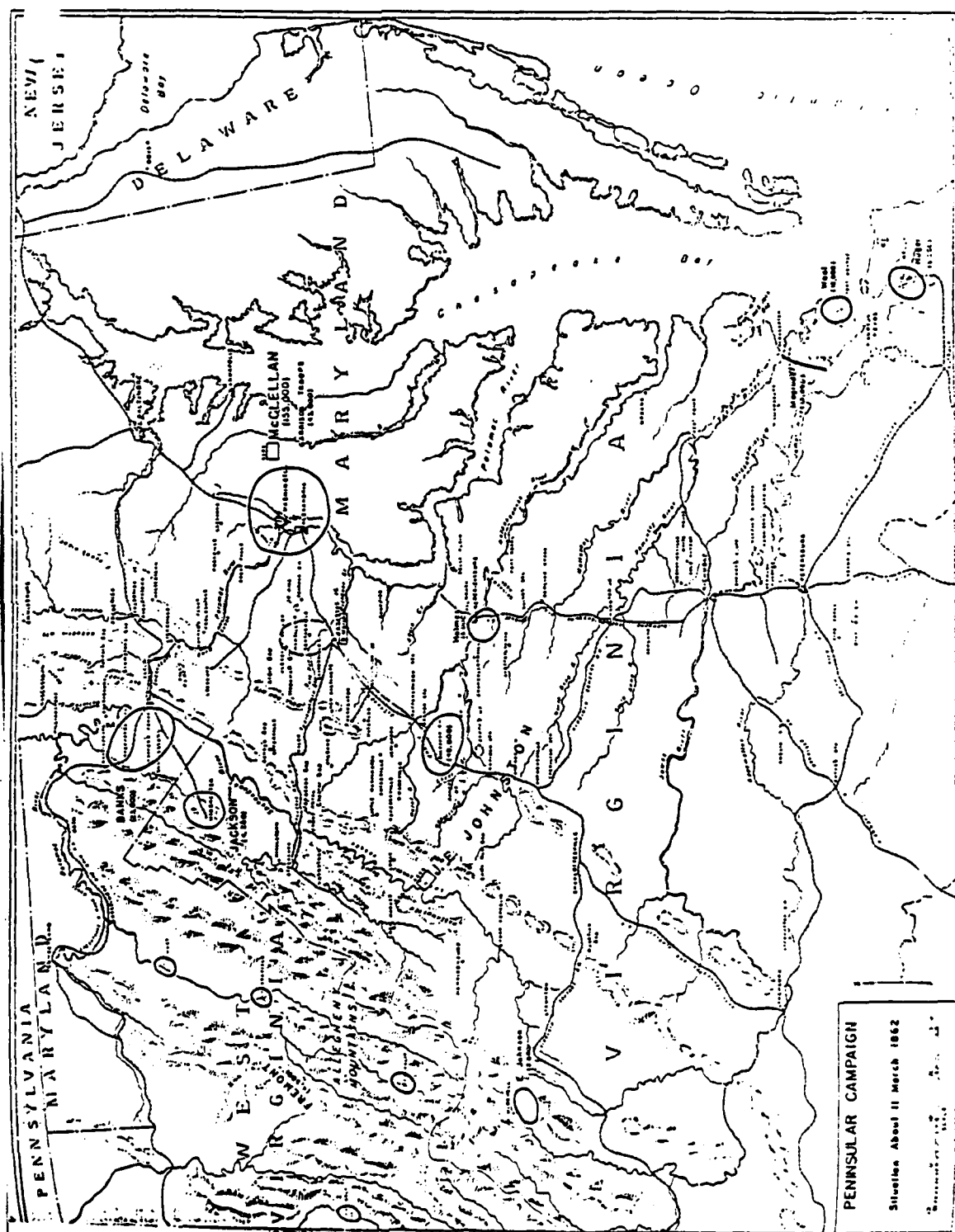
A fifth factor on which Johnston based many of his decisions was his faith in the ability of his force to move

quicker than the enemy could react to the move. The first clear indication of this fourth principle was the withdrawal from Yorktown, when his army was able to withdraw some distance up the Peninsula before McClellan could begin the pursuit with more than a cavalry force. His repeated moves under the guns of Sherman's army further attest to the relative superior mobility of his force and Johnston's faith in that superiority.

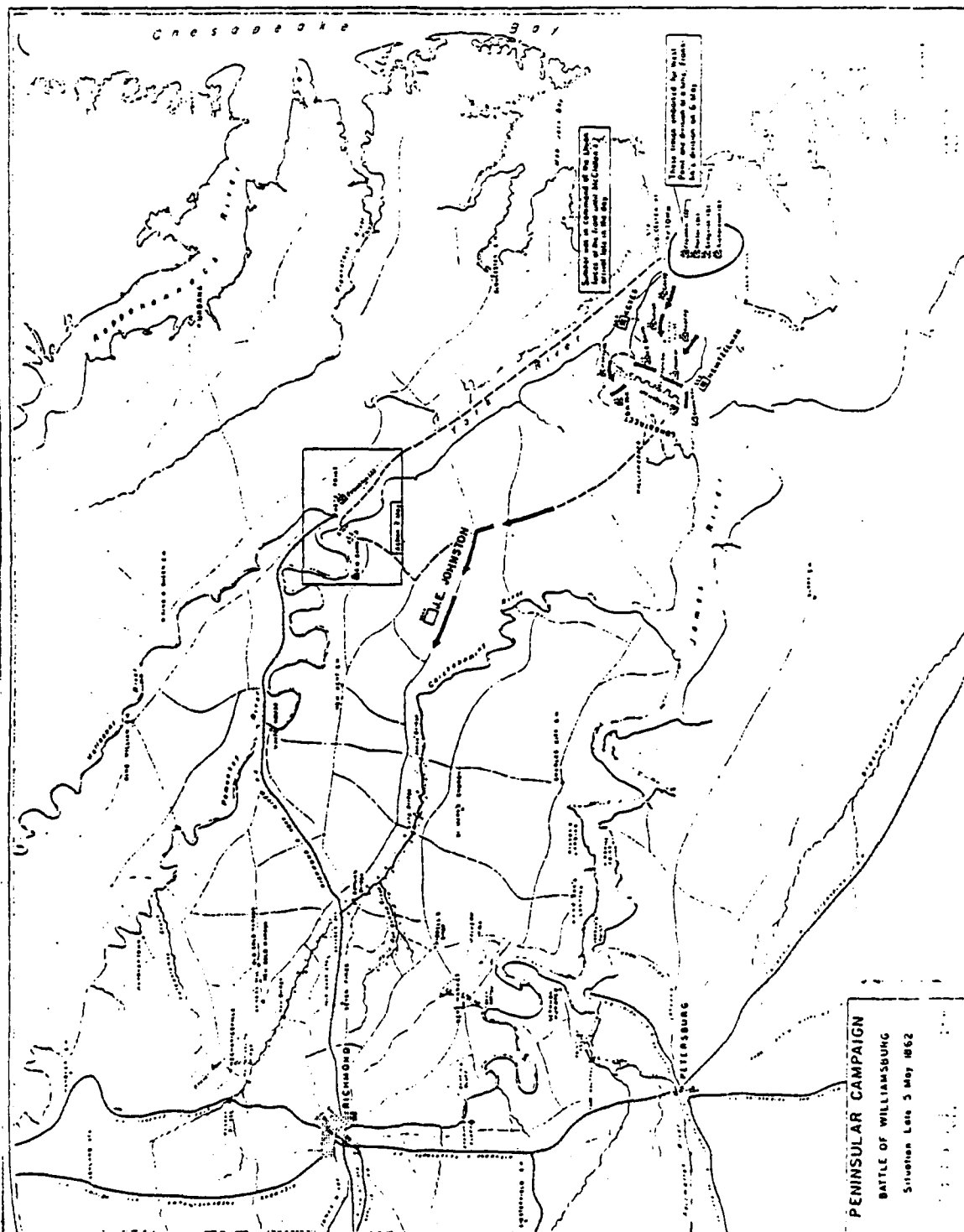
These then are the principles that Joseph E. Johnston utilized to govern his employment of operational level forces: preserve the force, concentration, wait for the enemy to blunder, and faith in his own force's relative superiority in mobility. In practicing them Johnston became a master of defensive operations, but failed in the most important aspect of the operational art. It will be remembered that part of the definition of the operational level of war is that it translates strategic goals into battlefield tactics. In both of the campaigns studied Johnston allowed his personal principles for the conduct of war to override the strategic guidance that he had received.

In the final analysis there are two ways to view the actions of Joseph E. Johnston as a commander. The first is expressed by the author who stated "he should have carried out the wishes of his government, or resigned in time to let another undertake the task." (108) The second way is to view him as a truly professional soldier, one who saw that the strategic directions given to him would only accomplish the destruction of his army. Thus only by ignoring these

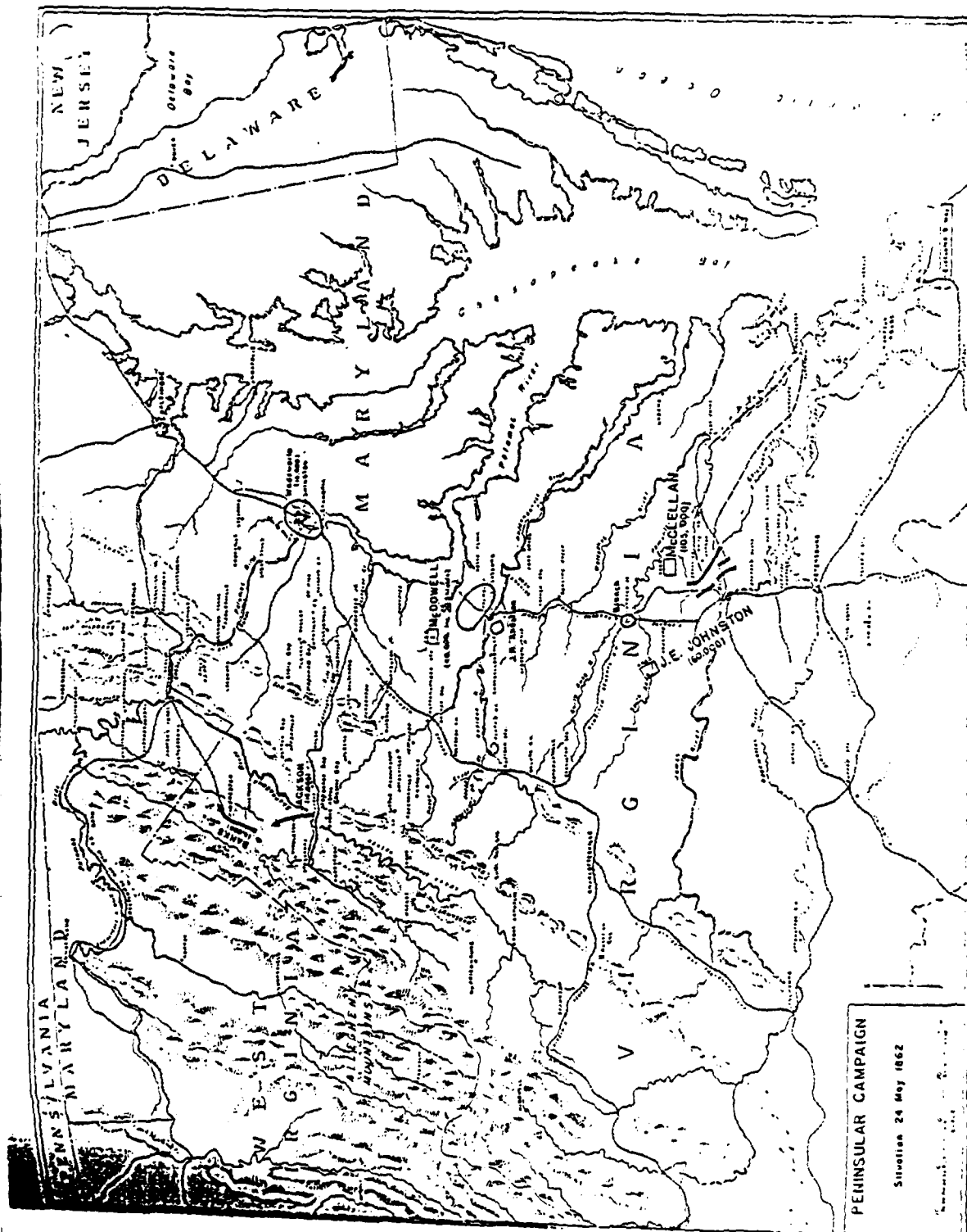
directions was he able to preserve his force, and thereby prolong the life of the nation for which he was fighting.



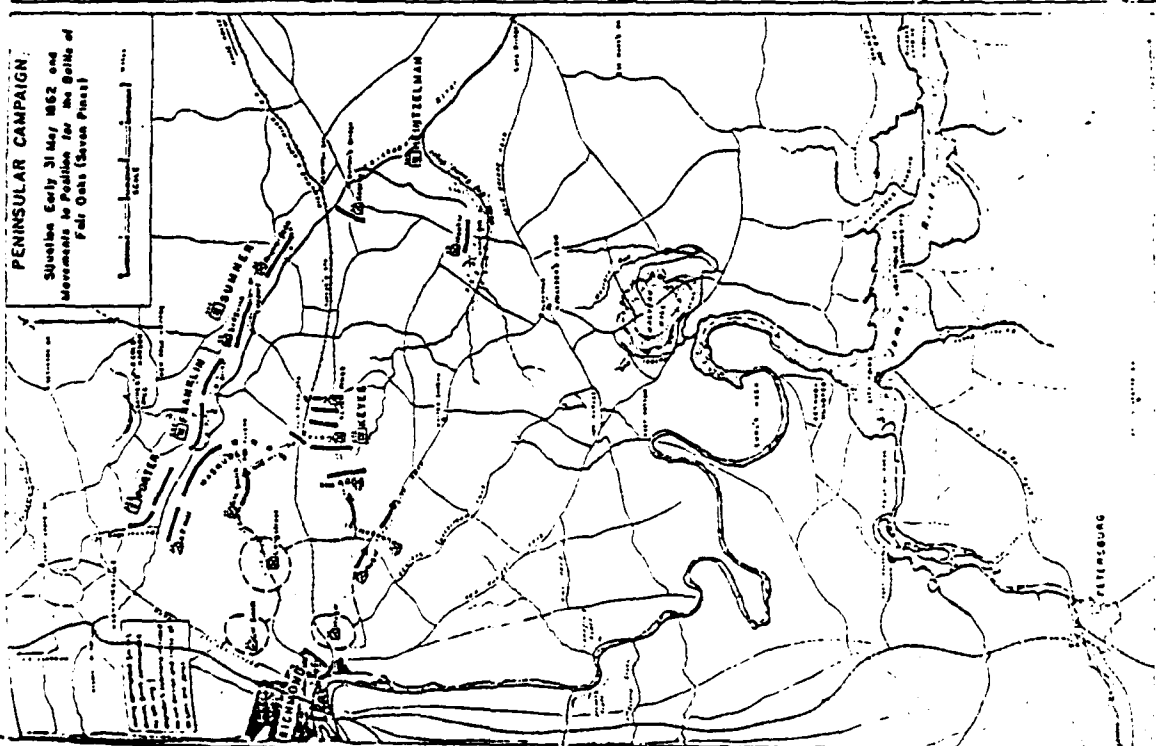
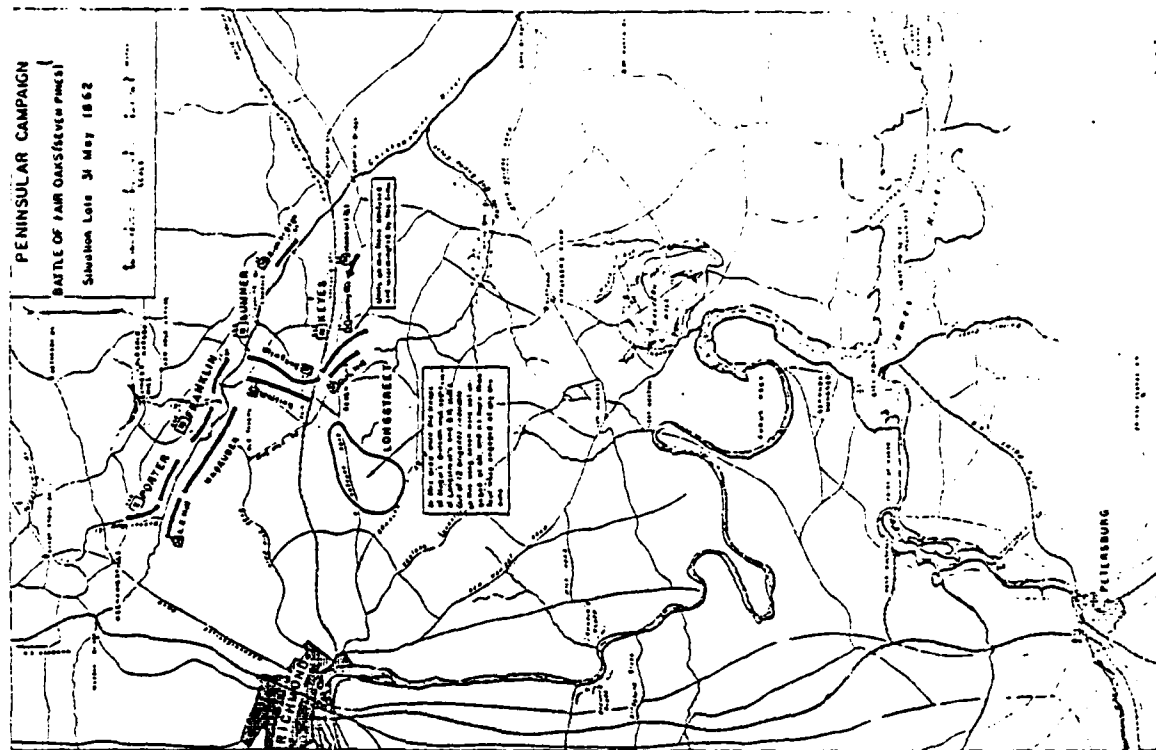
Map 13



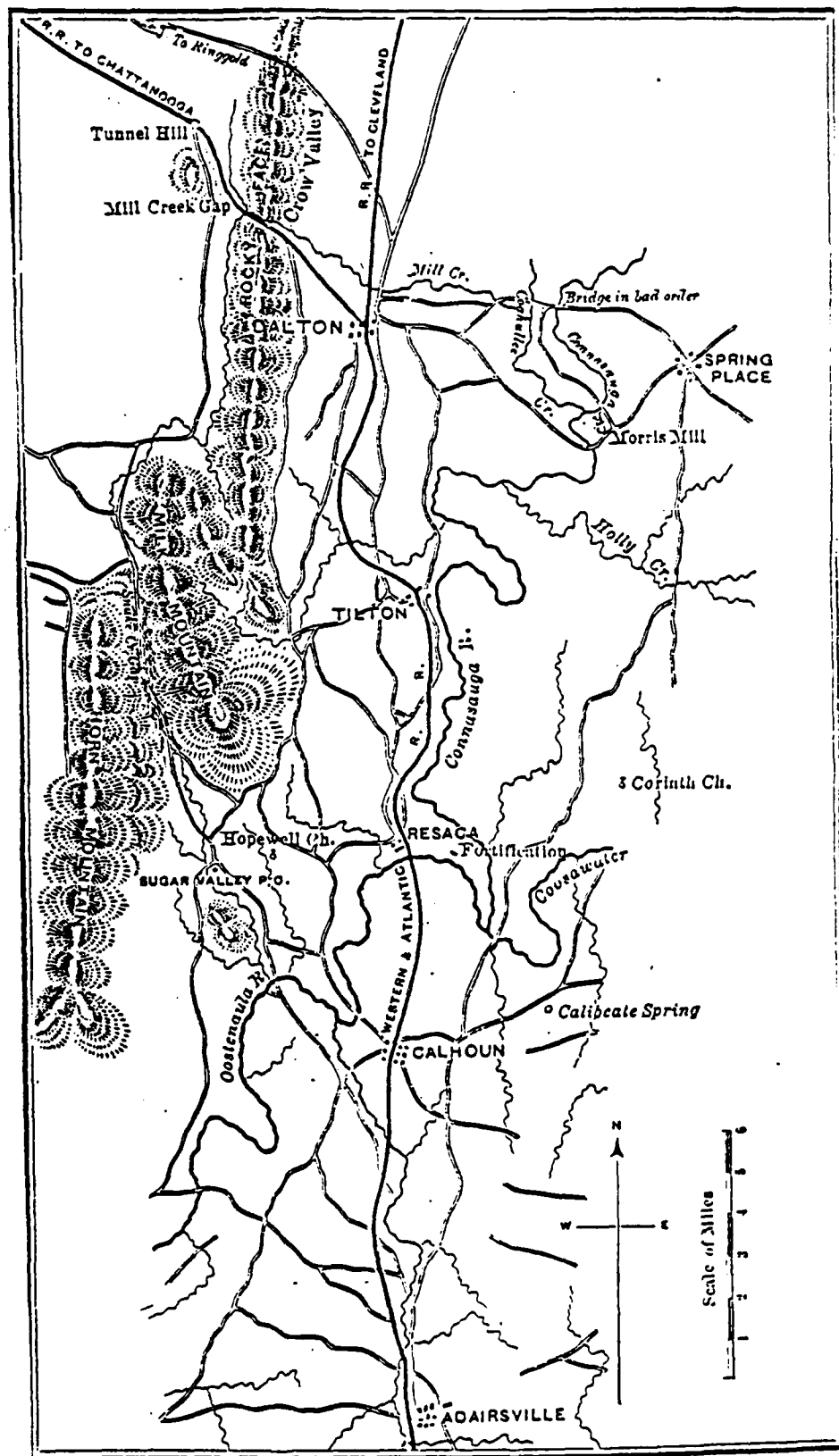
MAP 15



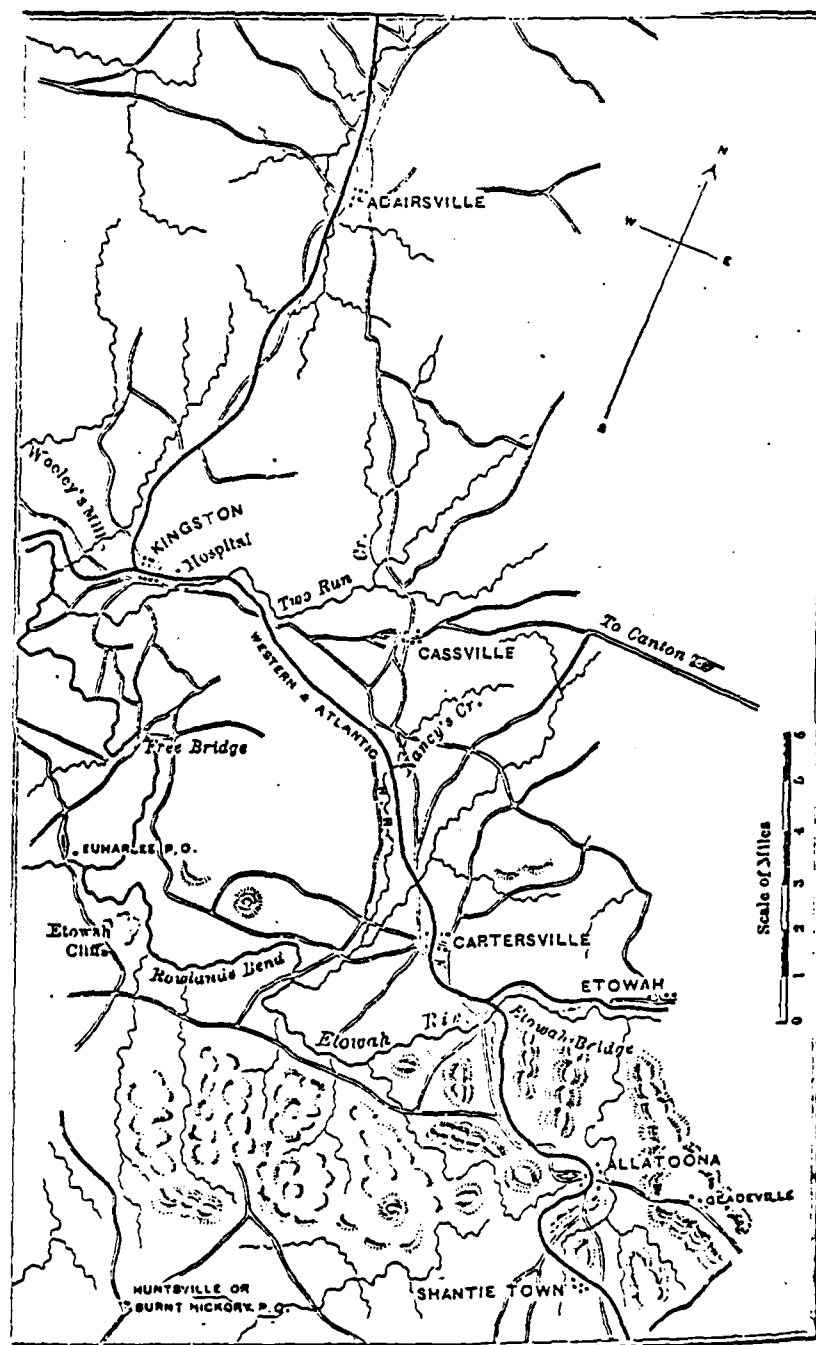
MAP 16



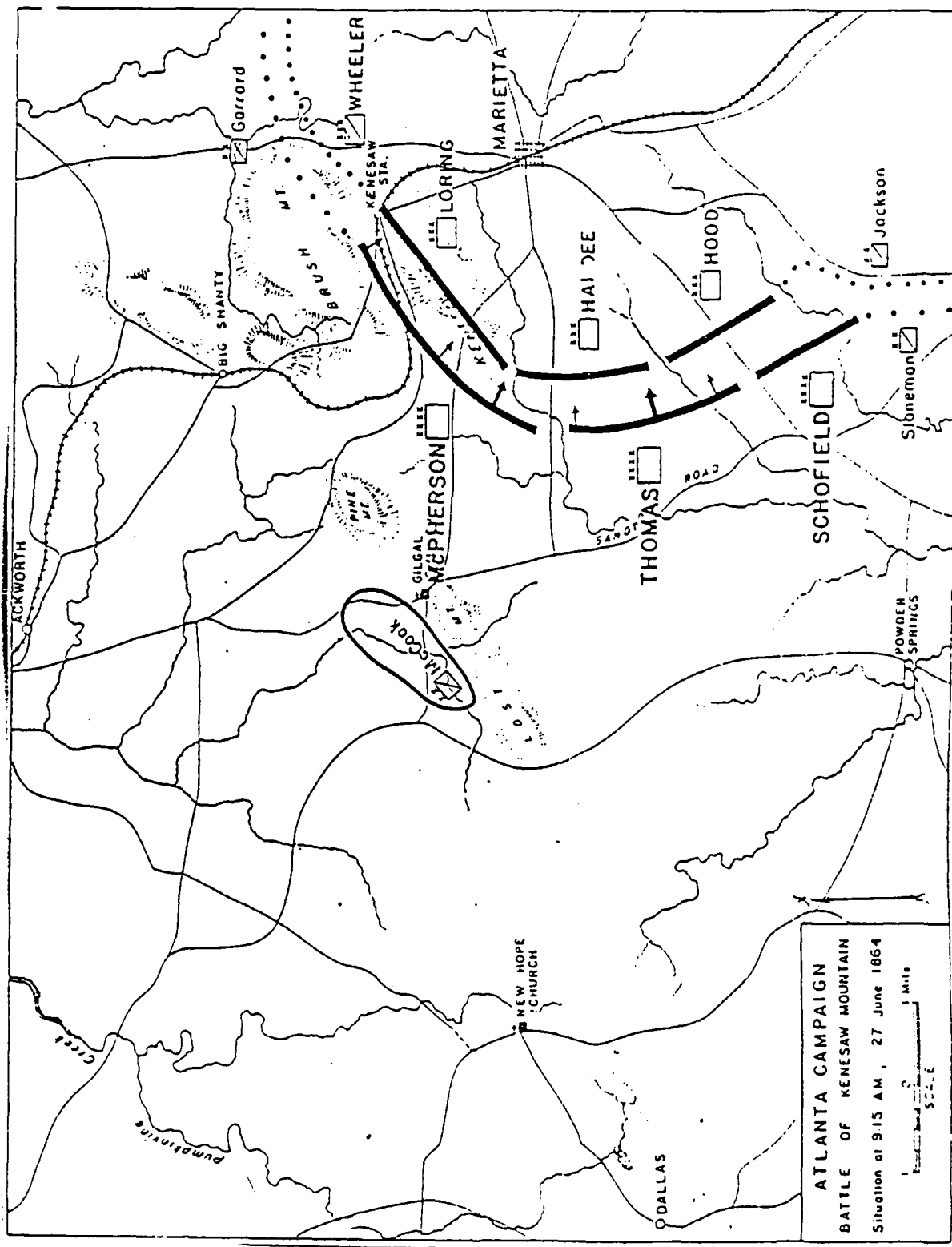
MAP 17



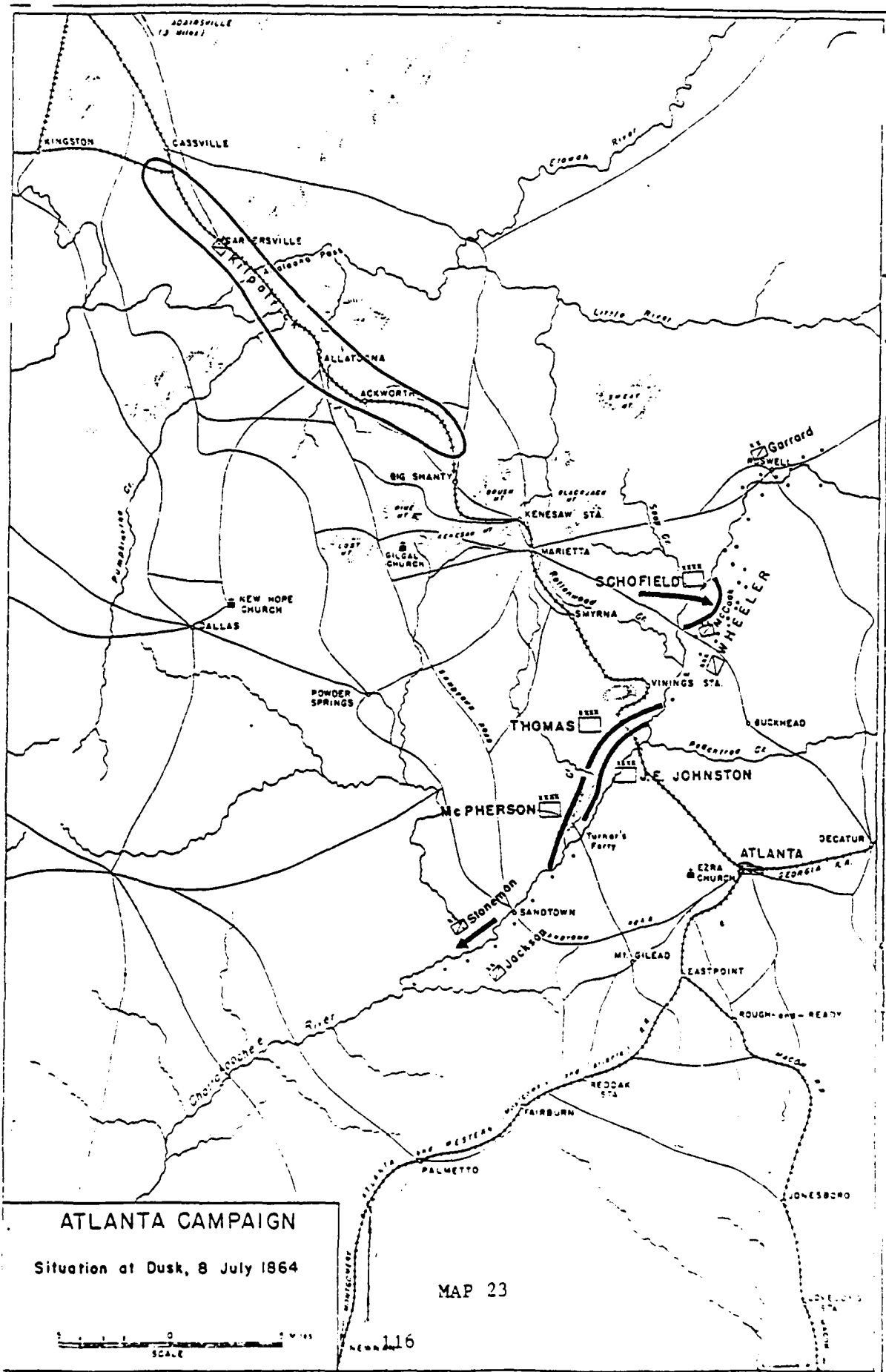
MAP 18



MAP 20



MAP 22



ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

Situation at Dusk, 8 July 1864

MAP 23

SCALE

116

Endnotes Chapter 3

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31. Govan, p127..
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60. Quoted in Hughes, p213.
61. Govan, p24.
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66. Ibid.
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- 80. Cox, p39.
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- 83. J.E. Johnston, p314.
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Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS

"These principles, though the result of long thought and continuous study of the history of war, have none the less been drawn up hastily, and thus will not stand severe criticism in regard to form. In addition, only the most important subjects have been picked from a great number, since a certain brevity was necessary. These principles, therefore, will not so much give complete instruction to Your Royal Highness, as they will stimulate and serve as a guide for your own reflections."(1)

The preceeding chapters have outlined the principles that guided Frederick the Great and Joseph E. Johnston in their conduct of war at the operational level. This chapter will compare, or more properly contrast, the principles utilized by these two commanders in their practice of the operational art. The chapter concludes with some implications of this comparison for the modern practitioners of the operational art.

THE PRINCIPLES COMPARED

Frederick, it will be recalled, enthusiastically embraced the principle of seizing and maintaining the initiative. He realized that to wage a purely defensive war would mean ultimate defeat, for if he remained passive his

numerically superior opponents would be able to unite and overwhelm him.

Johnston, in his campaign planning, nominally supported this idea. In both of the campaigns studied he called for incursions into Federal territory to divide the attention of the Union national command. In the Atlanta campaign this call was for Forrest to attack Sherman's lines of communications. In the Peninsula campaign during the siege of Yorktown he called for Davis to assemble a force and invade the North, thereby relieving some of the pressure being placed on the Army of Northern Virginia.(2)

In actual practice, though, Johnston rarely sought to gain the initiative. As was outlined in Chapter 3 the majority of his moves were in response to maneuvers by his opponents. This is true even in his plan for the Battle of Seven Pines where he was merely taking advantage of an error committed by McClellan. The only time in either campaign that Johnston attempted to shape the battlefield was at Cassville, a plan that went awry because of the over-cautious reactions of Hood.

In comparing Frederick and Johnston on this important principle one must not lose sight of their relative positions in their respective governments. Frederick was able to implement his offensive operations because he determined not only the operational objectives but also the strategic goals. Johnston, on the other hand, was simply a commander and was therefore required to operate within the strategic goals established by his government. He was also

dependent upon higher authority for subsidiary operations to assist his own, a problem Frederick did not face.

This relative disparity in political power is a significant factor in explaining the difference in the war fighting style of the two. Frederick had the entire resources of Prussia at his disposal; therefore what he planned he could execute. Conversely, Johnston could plan, but had to execute with the resources made available to him. This difference had an impact on what each was able to accomplish, and on the manner in which each planned and executed his campaign.

If these two individuals differed in their application of the principle of initiative, one concept that they did have in common was their faith in the superior mobility of their forces. But even in sharing this faith there are significant differences in the way they utilized this relative superiority. Frederick used the superior mobility of the Prussian army operationally to strike where, and at a time, his opponents least expected it. Johnston utilized his slight edge in mobility at the tactical level, to move his force from one position to another quicker than the Union forces could respond to the move.

Frederick used his superior mobility for a specific purpose, to force the enemy to give battle under conditions favorable to the Prussians. Johnston conceptually maneuvered for the same purpose while he was the commander of the Department of Northern Virginia. His withdrawal from the Centreville position, as well as his entire withdrawal up

the Peninsula, was designed to place the Confederate forces in a position that was favorable to them. However, in the Atlanta campaign the same cannot be said about his maneuvers. During this campaign his maneuvers, as has been shown, were in response to those of Sherman; they do not demonstrate a plan to bring the Union army to battle at a place and time of Johnston's choosing.

If Frederick maneuvered to bring the enemy to battle he also utilized the results of these battles to achieve his strategic goals. As shown in Chapter 2 this is one of the prime tasks of the operational commander, and one that Frederick was able to accomplish. Joe Johnston was not able to master this task. This inability, however, may reflect more on the strategic directions given to him than his ability. The Confederate goal of not giving up territory may well have been beyond the means provided Johnston by the Confederate government.

Closely tied to the whole concept of maneuvering is the principle, adhered to by both Frederick and Johnston, of striking at the enemy's weakness rather than his strength. Again the difference in application of this principle is significant. Frederick employed it at both the tactical and operational level whereas Johnston was able to attempt it only at the tactical. This does not mean, however, that Johnston did not realize the advantages of striking at the enemy's weaknesses on the operational level, as shown in his suggested employment of Forrest against Sherman's rear. Once more the answer for the seeming divergence in the

abilities of these two to employ this principle is their relative positions in setting strategic goals. Frederick had the authority to integrate all Prussian forces into his schemes of maneuver while Johnston was forced to utilize only those made available to him.

To understand why Johnston had to make use of only those forces made available to him by the central government, one must be aware of the departmental command system established by Jefferson Davis. In this system each geographical department was to be commanded by a general officer, and, in theory, each was to possess its own army. The departmental commander was responsible for the defenses of a specific geographic area, with great autonomy given to these commanders for the conduct of operations within his department.(3) This meant that the department commander usually had the final voice in any prospective reinforcement of another department, or in cooperative ventures with another department.(4) Thus, for example, S. D. Lee clearly had the authority to reject Johnston's requests for assistance in order to protect his own geographical territory.

For Johnston the proper utilization of the forces provided him was to concentrate them in order to fight the decisive battle. This is seen in his original plan for the defeat of McClellan and in his subsequent operations on the Peninsula, which were designed to achieve a decisive battle in the vicinity of Richmond. While Frederick did maneuver in order to fight battles, he did so not expecting the

results of a battle to decide the fate of the war. Thus he expected Rossbach to eliminate the French from the campaign, but knew it would not eliminate them from the war.

If Johnston was fascinated with the idea of fighting the great decisive battle, he was obsessed with the idea of protecting his lines of communication. The slightest threat to these lines appears to have been sufficient reason for Johnston to move. While Frederick was obviously concerned about his lines of communications, he was willing to accept a certain amount of risk in regards to them when the situation warranted.

Frederick was also not above deceiving his foe as to his intentions. As we have seen he was able to do this at both the tactical and the operational levels. Johnston, on the other hand, does not appear to have made a serious effort to deceive his opponent. The only action that even came close to being a deceptive operation was the planned counterattack at Cassville.

The final point of comparison is the contrast in the operational styles of the two individuals. Frederick believed strongly in leading from the front. As a result of this he was able to make quick, and accurate, decisions on both the operational and tactical schemes of maneuver. Johnston, it is true, did physically locate himself in close proximity to the front, but he did not command from the front. He developed plans, gave instructions to his subordinates for the execution of these plans and entrusted them with carrying out these instructions. Thus at Seven

Pines and Cassville, his subordinates, Longstreet and Hood, were allowed to alter the plan unsupervised, to the detriment of the operation. Perhaps a better way of phrasing it would be that Frederick recognized where the critical point in the operation would be and placed himself there; Johnston did not place himself at the critical points, rather trusting that his instructions would be carried out as he intended.

In summary, the foregoing analysis has shown that Frederick the Great and Joseph E. Johnston differed greatly in the principles that guided their employment of operational level forces. The few principles that are shared by the two are also a study in contrasts in the way they are applied.

IMPLICATIONS

This thesis was undertaken in the belief that the operational principles employed by Frederick and Johnston would be similar, if not identical. Having discovered, however, that the two did not have a significant number of principles for the operational art in common, what implications can be drawn?

The first implication that can be drawn is that initiative is a prerequisite to the successful outcome of a campaign. This does not mean that one has to be on the strategic, or even operational, offensive. It does mean that the defensive cannot be passive. As Clausewitz wrote,

"the defensive form of war is not a simple shield, but a shield of well-directed blows".(5) Frederick, through his actions, was able to do this, and thereby retain the initiative. The passive nature of Johnston's defense forced him to forfeit the initiative to his opponents.

A second implication that can be derived from this study is that one must think at the operational level in order to succeed. While the conduct of battles is important to the operational level commander, he must not become so involved in the tactics that he loses sight of his operational objective. Battles are fought only to further the operational objective so that the strategic goals can be achieved.

Arising from this is the implication that the strategic goals given to an operational commander to achieve must be consistent with the resources allocated to him. This means that the operational commander must have a mechanism to allow the policy maker know what his capabilities and limitations are. Implied in this statement is that the policy maker will believe, and heed, the information provided to him. As we have seen this mutual communication did not exist between Johnston and Davis.

A final implication that can be drawn is that time, if not God, is on the side of the larger force. If a numerically inferior force does not utilize surprise, deception and maneuver to offset its inferiority it will eventually be overwhelmed. At the operational level this means that campaigns must emphasize achieving results that

have strategic impact quickly. If this is not accomplished the conflict will continue, allowing the larger force to regroup. In a war of attrition time is on the side of the more numerous army.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion a statement about the nature of this study must be made. In retrospect the decision to compare the principles of Frederick the Great and Joseph E. Johnston may have been unwise for two reasons. The first reason, as already mentioned, was the relative disparity of political power enjoyed by the two. It is extremely difficult to compare the operational style of one who can command the entire resources of a nation to one who is only a servant of his nation.

The second reason that the choice may have been inappropriate is the amount of time that separates this author from the events. That is, the American Civil War is well documented by both primary and secondary sources from which can be drawn a picture of the events as they occurred. In the case of Frederick, the history of the Seven Years War was written after the fact, and the interpretations thus made of the events are, in all probability, set in the best possible light.

As Clausewitz pointed out

"Not only were conditions different in

more distant times, with different ways of waging war, so that earlier wars have fewer practical lessons for us; but military history, like any other kind, is bound with the passage of time to lose a mass of minor elements and details that were once clear... what remains in the end, more or less at random, are large masses and isolated features, which are thereby given undue weight."(6)

While the decision to attempt a comparison of these two commanders may have been unfortunate, this does not mean that the study of great commanders of the past is irrelevant. Valuable lessons can still be learned from the study of their campaigns. While some would argue that relevant, practical lessons for the present can only be learned from the study of campaigns and commanders of the more recent past, I do not believe that this is true. The principles remain, despite changes in technology, and in examining these principles implications for the current practice of the operational art can be drawn.

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